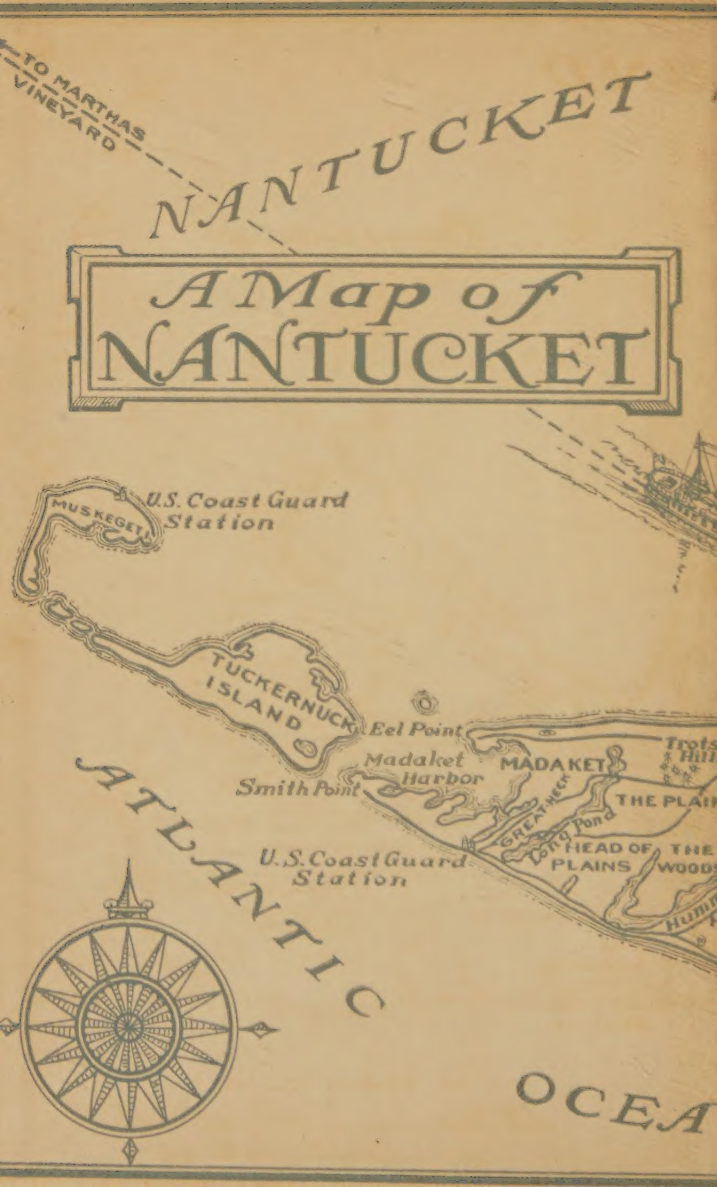
The STORY of OLD NANTUCKET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NANTUCKET
A Map of NANTUCKET
MUSKEGET
U.S. Coast Guard Station
TUCKERNUCK ISLAND
Eel Point
Madaket Harbor
Smith Point
MADAKET
Frost Hill
THE PLAIN
GREATHEAD
Long Pond
HEAD OF PLAINS
THE WOOD
U.S. Coast Guard Station
ATLANTIC
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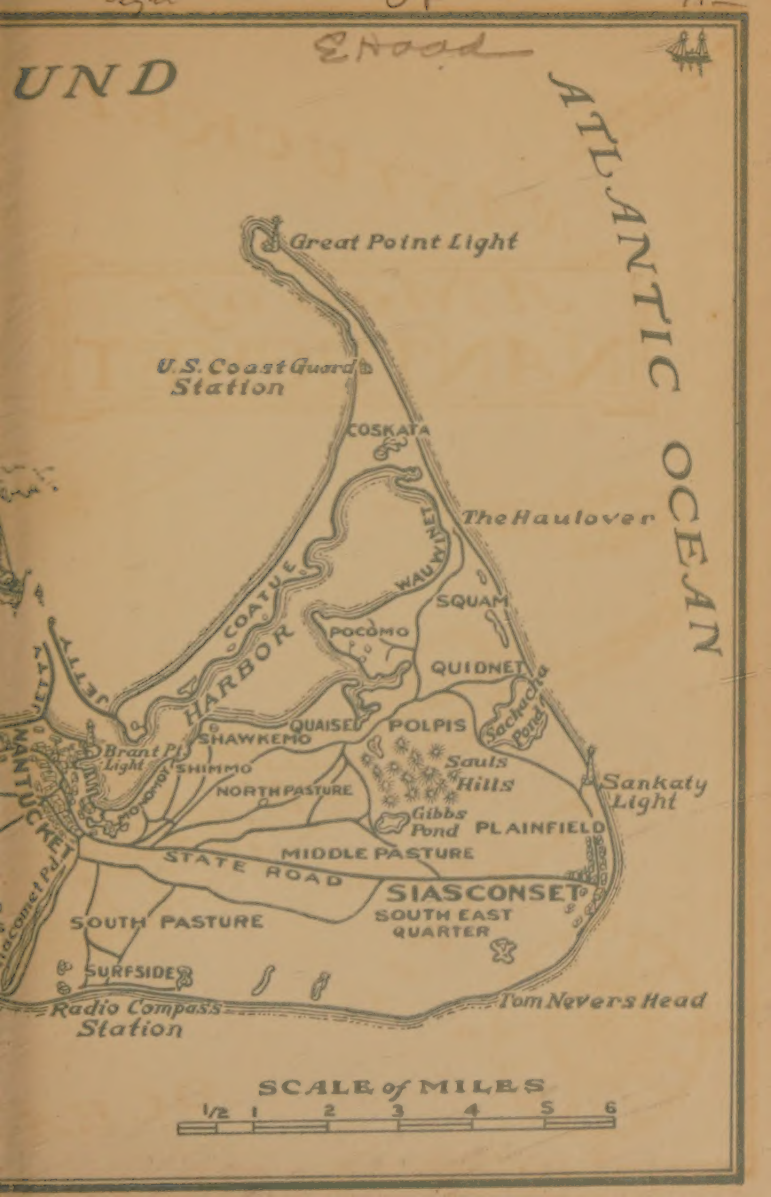
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QUIDNET
Sachacha Pond
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POLPIS
SHAWKEMO
Brant Pt Light
SHIMMO
NORTH PASTURE
Sauls Hills
Sankaty Light
Gibbs Pond
PLAINFIELD
MIDDLE PASTURE
STATE ROAD
SIASCONSET
SOUTH EAST QUARTER
SOUTH PASTURE
SURFSIDE
Radio Compass Station
Tom Nevers Head
SCALE of MILES
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I enjoy sharing my books as I do my friends, asking only that you treat them well and see them safely home
Edith C. Merchant.

The Story of Old Nantucket

UPPER MAIN STREET

THE STORY OF OLD NANTUCKET

A Brief History of the Island and its People from its Discovery down to the Present Day

BY

WILLIAM F. MACY

PRESIDENT OF THE NANTUCKET HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

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To the Cherished Memory of those Ancestors of Ours
who, by their Enterprise, Energy, and Industry
Made this Little Town the
Greatest Whaling Port in the World
the Author Dedicates
'THE STORY OF OLD NANTUCKET'

PREFACE
TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE fact that a fairly large edition of this little 'Story,' which it was believed at the time of its first publication would be sufficient to supply the probable market for at least two or three decades, was sold out within two or three years, and that there has been a steady and increasing call for copies of it ever since, seems to indicate that there was an even greater demand for such a book than, even in my most sanguine moments, I had supposed possible.

With such encouragement, therefore, a second edition, revised, expanded, and brought down to date by the addition of a chapter covering briefly the twelve-year period since the original edition appeared, is now confidently launched under such auspices as would seem to assure an even more favorable reception than was accorded the first.

In the interim between the two editions of my little book the first real history of

Nantucket has appeared. This volume of nearly nine hundred octavo pages represents what was practically the life work, as an absorbing avocation, of the late Alexander Starbuck, than whom no greater authority on all that concerns the island's past ever lived or probably ever will live. To this monumental and well-nigh exhaustive work the inquiring reader is referred for facts and information only obtainable elsewhere, if at all, at the cost of endless research. My one wish now is that my humble effort may lead its readers to this great mine of source material for a wider knowledge and a better understanding of the subject treated.

Every serious future student of Nantucket's history must acknowledge his eternal obligation to Mr. Starbuck's untiring industry and enthusiasm, as well as to his unique fitness and equipment for the task which he finally completed in time for publication only a few weeks before his death.

W. F. M.

PREFACE
TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE oft-quoted scriptural saying, 'Of the making of many books there is no end,' applies with particular force to Nantucket. Her bibliography is already extensive. Why, then, yet another book? My excuse is that, with all the books, there is none which tells the story of Nantucket's past briefly, yet with some completeness, and in a way which appeals to the casual tourist or summer visitor, who, while wanting to know something of the historic background of the island, has neither the time nor the taste for documents and records or the study of statistics.

I believe there is some demand for such a book, which I have tried to meet. My modest offering makes no pretensions to being a work of original research, though I have carefully studied all the authorities available, and I acknowledge my deep indebtedness to all previous writers on the subject. For my facts and figures I have

drawn freely, as occasion required, from all reliable sources, but the story is something more than a mere compilation of extracts and excerpts from other works, and, without attempting to treat the subject exhaustively, I have selected those episodes and events which have seemed to me most salient and most likely to prove of interest.

It may be that the book will be distinguished more for what is omitted than for what is included, but it may perhaps stimulate the reader's interest as an introduction to and an appetizer for the more substantial repasts which await him.

To those more leisurely students, whose appetites may be thus whetted to pursue the subject further, I recommend the perusal of Obed Macy's 'History of Nantucket,' Alexander Starbuck's 'History of the American Whale Fishery,' Lydia S. Hinchman's 'Early Settlers of Nantucket,' William Root Bliss's 'Quaint Nantucket,' Henry S. Wyer's 'Sea Girt Nantucket,' and Dr. R. A. Douglas-Lithgow's valuable work, 'Nantucket: a History'; also all the bulletins and publications of the Nantucket Historical As-

sociation, especially those on 'Nantucket Lands and Land Owners,' by Henry B. Worth.

My book is produced at a popular price and in a handy form and size, which may be slipped in the pocket and read in an idle hour on the hotel veranda, on the beach, or while traveling by the 'Sconset express.

W. F. M.

BOSTON, *May*, 1915

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THE STORY OF OLD NANTUCKET

CHAPTER I

EARLY HISTORY AND DISCOVERIES

THE story of Nantucket, like all stories worth relating, is the story of a people — of a simple, sturdy race and their descendants, who settled and subdued this little island wilderness, and developed here from small beginnings a type of civilization which has rarely if ever been excelled in a like period of time in all history.

When, in the light of our modern advantages, we reflect upon the handicaps under which these people labored; when we realize how limited were their resources; when we see this barren soil, yielding its fruits only to the most arduous and untiring industry; when we contemplate this relentless ocean surrounding us on all sides, ever ready to rise in its might

to rend and destroy the results of man's puny efforts to bend it to his purposes; when we think of this rigorous climate, eternally aiding and abetting the soil and the sea in their blind attempts to frustrate the best-laid plans to circumvent and overcome them — when we consider and take thought of these things, we who trace our ancestry back to those hardy pioneers who came, saw and conquered in spite of all, may well take a pardonable pride in their accomplishment, while we marvel at their courage, their resource, their energy and their infinite patience.

And yet — they were but human, like the rest of us, just ordinary everyday folks; and they had their faults, their follies and their frailties, as well as their virtues. Let us not forget that, for viewed in that light, what they did, what they were and what they accomplished has far greater significance for us than if, as we are so prone to do, we make demi-gods of them and attribute to them qualities of body, mind, heart or soul which we ourselves do not, at least potentially, possess. No one can study in a sympathetic spirit the history of the early times on the island

without recognizing the fact that here, as elsewhere, the same eternal motives of greed of gain, worldly ambition and love of power, bigotry and prejudice, individual likes and dislikes, loves and hates, and all the other ideas and passions and purposes which actuate us all to-day in our relations with our fellow-men, were quite as much in evidence in our ancestors, though possibly somewhat more modified, and tempered by their hope of reward or fear of punishment in the life to come, than may be the case in this materialistic age.

When, two hundred and fifty years ago, Tristram Coffin and John Gardner fought for supremacy in the councils of the Island, they used much the same methods and weapons as a couple of local petty bosses might employ in this year of our Lord; and though they did make up finally and agreed, for the sake of harmony, to bury the hatchet, such an outcome is not quite unknown even now.

So it is only by accepting these characters at their true value and not at any fictitious estimate of their worth, based on tradition-strengthened-by-time-and-repetition, that we can really put ourselves in

their position and appreciate our debt to them.

With this preliminary introduction to our ancestors — the only excuse for which is a theory of the writer, who claims descent from nearly if not quite all of them, that this point of view, though hinted at by other writers, has hardly been sufficiently emphasized even yet — and with the announcement of an honest and sincere purpose to deal with our forbears with all the forbearance to which they are entitled — and no more — the story begins.

. . . . . .

Nantucket was probably 'discovered' many times before it was finally put on the map and settled by white men. Modern Irish writers have recently entered a claim to the discovery of the Western world by voyagers from the Emerald Isle even before the Norsemen's more or less well-authenticated voyages to this section. There is little doubt that the Norsemen saw Nantucket on one or more of those voyages — probably before the end of the tenth century; and as there is no very strong evidence distinguishing any one

spot from a number of others as the legendary 'Winland dat Gode,' or the good vine-land, except the abundance of wild grapes — for which our island has been famous since the time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary — Nantucket might even add its claim to those already filed as being the abode for a brief time during the year 1000 A.D. of that venturesome viking, Leif Erikson, though the present writer would not care to be understood as seriously advancing such claim.

In 1497 and 1498 John and Sebastian Cabot explored the coast of the North American continent from the Gulf of Mexico to Labrador, and the early English claim to most of the Atlantic seaboard was based on the discoveries and explorations made during this voyage. It is hardly conceivable that the Cabots could have missed seeing Nantucket, and it is probable that they passed quite near it.

Whatever credit attaches to the actual discovery of the island is, however, usually awarded to Captain Bartholomew Gosnold, who sailed in the barque Concord from Falmouth, England, on March

26, 1602 — more than a century after the voyage of the Cabots — with a crew and company of thirty-two men, including one Gabriel Archer, from whose account of the voyage we learn that Gosnold discovered and named Cape Cod from the 'great store of codfish' they took there. That was on May 15, 1602, about seven weeks out from port — not a bad voyage for the season of the year and in view of what we may surmise as to the size, model, rig and equipment of the Concord. On the following day, Archer relates, they 'trended the coast southerly twelve leagues from Cape Cod, saw a point with some beach, named it Point Care. May 18, sighted another point, called it Gilbert's Point; also divers islands, Indians in canoes with skins, tobacco and pipes to barter,' etc. 'Point Care' was doubtless Monomoy Point, Chatham, and 'Gilbert's Point' has been identified as Point Gammon, at the easterly entrance to Hyannis Harbor.

This would seem to fix the discovery fairly accurately, as we may well assume that Nantucket was one of the divers islands seen on May 18th, after passing Monomoy. Obed Macy says, without

giving the date or any authority for his conclusion, that Gosnold 'pursued his course southerly until he came up with Sandy Point, the southern extremity of the County of Barnstable. . . . It being late in the day, to avoid danger he stood off to sea, and in the night came in sight of the white cliffs at the east end of Nantucket, now called Sankota Head.' Dr. Lithgow goes even further and states that in June or July, 1602, Gosnold landed at Sankaty. While both historians may have had access to authorities with which the writer is not familiar, so far as he has been able to discover from the documentary evidence available to him, there seems to be nothing to give either statement any standing higher than that of conjecture, or at best, probability. Elsewhere Dr. Lithgow, who is a careful and conscientious historian, quotes Samuel Adams Drake as authority for certain statements. Mr. Drake's 'Nooks and Corners of the New England Coast' is a most entertaining book, but its author manages to compress such a surprising amount of misinformation within the limits of a very brief article on Nantucket as to seriously dis-

credit any statements contained therein not supported by other evidence.

Starbuck, in his 'History of Nantucket,' referring to the voyage in 1606, of Pourtrincourt, who reported seeing an island six or seven leagues from their harbor (which Freeman, in his 'History of Cape Cod,' thinks was at Chatham), says that this island, which they named 'Douteuse,' or 'Doubtful,' was probably Nantucket.

The point is of little importance, however, and it is not this writer's intention to be controversial or to criticize other students much better fitted by temperament and training than he for the task in hand. He simply wishes to avoid jumping at conclusions from insufficient data, as well as the repetition without verification of possible errors, which, if repeated often enough, may in time come to have the earmarks of verisimilitude. The whole subject is so obscure and the documentary evidence so incomplete and contradictory, that almost any statement as to the events prior to the actual settlement of the island must needs be qualified by the word 'probably,' and an individual opinion is of value proportionate only to the reputation and

standing of its sponsor as a student and historian. Claiming no such distinction, or other qualification beyond a sincere desire to set down only what is actually established beyond reasonable doubt, the writer therefore frankly dodges the issue, and respectfully refers the curious reader to the various authorities on the subject, with the hope that after a careful examination thereof he may at the end know at least as much about it as he did at the beginning.

CHAPTER II

FROM TRADITION TO FACT

EVENTS moved slowly in those days; a century then was as a decade later on so far as actual progress in the settlement and development of the New World was concerned. So it is perhaps not surprising that another forty years elapsed before we hear much of anything more about Nantucket. Gradually, however, it began to be differentiated from others of the 'divers islands,' though sometimes scarcely recognizable under the various aliases of Nauticon, Nantican, Natocks, Nantock, Nantukes, Mantukes, Nantoket, Nantockyte, Nantucquet, Nantuckett, and so on — each narrator, conveyancer or cartographer apparently adopting an original spelling of his own.

Little is known of this period between the reputed discovery and the settlement. It has been asserted and repeated by various writers that there were at some time upward of three thousand Indians on the island, but there seems to be no better basis for such an estimate than for those

advanced by other authorities placing the probable number at fifteen hundred, five hundred, or any other figure. It is known only that the island was fairly well populated by the red men at the time of its settlement by the whites.

There is a tradition of an Indian war, which was supposed to have been waged somewhere about 1630, between the tribes at the northeastern part of the island under the sachem Wauwinet, and those of the southwesterly section under Autopscot. A beautiful legend survives of a reconciliation effected between those belligerent chiefs through the romantic love affair of Autopscot and a daughter of Wauwinet named Wonoma, who, being versed in medicine and the art of healing the sick, had, on a former occasion when the tribes were at peace, rendered valuable aid to Autopscot's people in staying a pestilence which had broken out among them. Touched with gratitude for this service, so freely rendered, as well as by the beauty and charm of the noble Indian maiden, Autopscot had laid siege to her affections and had won her secret promise to return again soon as his bride.

When later the two tribes were at war, Wonoma's heart was torn 'twixt love and duty, and having by chance learned the plan of a proposed attack by her father's warriors upon those of Autopscot, she journeyed secretly at night to her lover, and gave him warning. Wauwinet, finding his enemy prepared, withheld his attack, and on the following day Autopscot sought out Wauwinet and sued for peace and for his daughter's hand at the same time. At first Wauwinet was very angry, but he gradually relented, and finally became reconciled to his enemy and accepted him as a son-in-law.

This legend is very charmingly told in blank verse in the Hiawatha metre by Miss Charlotte P. Baxter, first published in the Nantucket 'Inquirer and Mirror' about 1876, and reprinted in the same paper January 21, 1911.

James Forrett, as agent for Lord Sterling, to whom all the lands between Cape Cod and the Hudson River had been granted by the Crown, sold in 1641 'the island of Nantuckett and two other small islands adjacent' (presumably Tuckernuck and Muskeget) to Thomas Mayhew

of Watertown, merchant, and to Thomas Mayhew, his son. The consideration, as set forth in the deed, was such a yearly acknowledgment 'as shall be thought fit by John Winthrop the Eld'r Esq'r or any Two Magistrates in the Massachusetts Bay, being chosen for that End and purpose by the Hon'ble the Lord Sterling or his deputy, and by the said Thomas Mayhew and Thomas Mayhew his son, or Their Associates.'

Eighteen years later, July 2, 1659, Mayhew senior gave the oft-quoted deed to the nine original proprietors, which, as it marks the beginning of Nantucket's actual history, so far as the white race is concerned, is once more reprinted in full as follows:

Copy of Deed of Nantucket to Nine Purchasers
[Dated July 2, 1659]

Recorded for Mr. Coffin and Mr. Macy afores'd, ye Day and Year afores'd.

Be it known unto all men by these Presents that I, Thomas Mayhew of Martin's Vineyard, Merchant, doe hereby acknowledge that I have sould unto Tristram Coffin, Thomas Macy, Christopher Hussey, Richard Swayne, Thomas Bernard, Peter Coffin, Stephen

Greenleafe, John Swayne, and William Pike that Right and Interest I have in ye Land of Nantuckett by Patent: ye wch Right I bought of James Forrett, Gent., Steward unto ye Lord Sterling and of Richard Vines, sometimes of Sacho, Gent., Steward-Gen'ell unto Sir Georges Knight as by Conveyances under their Hands and Seales doe appeare, ffor them ye aforesaid to Injoy, and their Heyres and Assignes forever w'th all the Privilidges thereunto belonging, for in consideration of ye Sume of Thirty Pounds of Current Pay unto whomsoever I ye said Thomas Mayhew, mine Heyres or Assines shall appoint.

And also two Beaver Hatts one for myself and one for my wife.

And further this is to declare that I the said Thomas Mayhew have received to myself that Neck upon Nantucket called Masquetuck or that Neck of Land called Nashayte the Neck (but one) northerly of Masquetuck ye aforesaid Sayle in anywise notwithstanding.

And further, I ye said Thomas Mayhew am to beare my Part of the Charge of ye said Purchase above named, and to hold one twentieth Part of all Lands purchased already, or shall be hereafter purchased upon ye said Island by ye afores'd Purchas'rs or Heyres or Assignes forever.

Briefly: It is thus: That I really sold all my Patent to ye aforesaid nine men and they are to pay mee or whomsoever I shall appoint them, ye sume of Thirty Pounds in good Marchantable Pay in ye Massachusetts, under wch Governm't they now Inhabit, and 2 Beaver Hatts, and I am to beare a 20th Part of ye Charge of ye Purchase, and to have a 20th Part of all Lands and Privileges; and to have wch of ye Necks afors'd that I will myselfe, paying for it; only ye Purchasers are to pay what ye Sachem is to have for Masquetuck, although I have ye other Neck.

And in witness hereof I have hereunto sett my Hand and Seale this second Day of July sixteen hundred and fifty nine — (1659)

Per me
Tho. Mayhew.

Witness: John Smith
Edward Searle.

No titles to lands based on the royal grants were recognized as legal until confirmed by subsequent releases of the Indian sachem rights, so the proprietors at once set about securing such, as will appear. Mayhew had undoubtedly had some understanding with certain of the sachems as to buying their rights, and the first Indian deed runs to him, antedating

his deed to the nine proprietors by twelve days. This deed was from Nickanoose (son of Wauwinet) and Nanahuma, and conveys, for a consideration of twelve pounds, 'the plain at the West end of Nantucket,' and also 'the use of the meadow and to take wood for the use of him, the said Mayhew.'

On May 10, 1660, 'Wanackmamack and Nickanoose, head sachems of Nantucket island,' conveyed to Mayhew and the nine to whom he had sold the island, 'all the Land, Meadow, Marshes, Timber, Wood and all the appurtenances thereunto belonging and being and lying from the West end of the island of Nantucket unto the Pond called by the Indians Waqutuquab, and from the head of that pond, upon a straight line unto the Pond situated by Monomoy Harbor or Creek, now called Wheeler's Creek, and so from the Northeast corner of the said Pond to the sea . . .' also 'the one half of the remainder of the meadows and marshes upon all other parts of the island.'

This deed was not witnessed until January 17, 1664, and the acknowledgment by Matthew Mayhew, Secretary to the

General Court, is dated June 12, 1667. It conveys lands to which neither of the grantors had, so far as we may judge, any very good title — their territories being located at the opposite or eastern end of the island. Henry B. Worth, in his 'Nantucket Lands and Land Owners,' calls attention to the fact that neither Wanackmamack nor Nickanoose ever deeded any lands which he himself owned, but apparently only those which belonged to some other sachem, which may account for some at least of the difficulties which arose later between the settlers and the Indians over land titles.

Various other deeds from the Indians, some confirming title to the above-mentioned lands, and others describing tracts in other parts of the island, appear on the records for a century or more after the settlement. Though there was more or less litigation over these conveyances from time to time, on the whole the intent of the contracting parties was perhaps as clear and the descriptions of the lands as accurate, in a general way, as in many deeds made and executed by white men in the thinly settled sections of New England

even to this day. It has been asserted that the Indians sometimes tried to repudiate some of their transfers of land which had apparently been made in good faith. It would be difficult at this late day to pass judgment on the merits of such claims, but it is probably safe to assume that the purchaser had not in every case gone out of his way to make perfectly clear to the untutored savage the exact nature of the document he was signing. If the buyer could not get just what he wanted, he perhaps took what he could get, and relied on possession and a superior knowledge of the law to sustain his position if assailed. This, it is admitted, is only a surmise, based on a somewhat extended observation of more modern methods, but it probably accounts for some at least of the misunderstandings which afterward arose.

The history of all or nearly all of the early settlements in North America was repeated here, with some variations, and there was more or less difficulty in governing and controlling the Indians at times — due in most cases to the old, old story of the pernicious influence of John Barleycorn — but on the whole it is to the credit

of both races that there was no actual warfare or bloodshed between them, and little if any actual oppression of the weaker by the stronger. The inevitable tragedy of the survival and dominance of the fitter, and the gradual disappearance and final extinction of the less fit was enacted with rather less cause for reproach to either than was the rule elsewhere.

At about the time of the first settlement of the island by the whites, namely, on October 10, 1659, Thomas Mayhew deeded to Tristram, Peter, Tristram, Jr., and James Coffin the island of 'Tuckanuck or Tuckanuckett' for a consideration of £6. On February 20, 1661, Wanackmamack deeded to these same grantees one-half of Tuckernuck for £10, one-half down, and the remainder 'when Thomas Mayhew decides who is the proper owner.'

It had been agreed between the original purchasers that each was to be allowed to choose an associate or partner, who should join in the venture on equal terms with themselves. Pursuant to this arrangement, at a meeting held on February 2, 1659, at Salisbury, in the Massachusetts

Bay province, where most of the original nine then resided, the following-named men were added to the proprietary: Nathaniel and Edward Starbuck, Tristram, Jr., and James Coffin, John Smith, Thomas Look, Robert Barnard, Robert Pike and Thomas Coleman. It was further agreed that ten others should be taken in on the basis of one-half share each. The records show that fourteen of these half shares were afterward issued. In some cases two half shares were granted to one man, and some of the original holders of a whole share were, for one reason or another (such as any special service he contracted to render the community) granted one or more extra half shares each. John Bishop and Richard Gardner were granted two half shares each; Peter Folger, his son Eleazur, Thomas Macy, Joseph Coleman, Joseph Gardner, Samuel Stretor, John Gardner and Nathaniel Holland one half share each; William Worth received one and one-half half shares, and Nathaniel Wier was granted in 1667 'one half of a sort of a poor one.' These half share allotments were made at various times from 1659 to

1667, and their owners came to be known as 'half-share men.' Each of the original ten owners was granted liberty to take a partner, and it was recorded that 'Robert Pike was owned partner with Christopher Hussey, Robert Barnard was owned partner with Thomas Barnard, Edward Starbuck was owned to be Thomas Macy's partner, and Tristram Coffin, Jnr. partner with Stephen Greenleaf, James Coffin with Peter Coffin.' It was further 'mutually and unanimously agreed upon, determined and concluded that no man whatsoever shall purchase any land of any of the Indians upon the said Iland for his own private or particular use, but whatsoever purchas shall be made shall be for the general account of the Twenty owners or purchasers.' It was further ordered and determined that ten others shall be admitted as necessary tradesmen and seamen, to have only 'such accommodation as the owners or purchasers shall judge meet.' At a later meeting this order was reaffirmed to stand 'Inviolable unalterable.'

John Smith was later chosen partner with Thomas Mayhew; Nathaniel Starbuck with Tristram Coffin, Sr.; Thomas

Look with Richard Swain; Thomas Coleman with John Swain, and Thomas Mayhew, Jr., with his father, Thomas Mayhew, Sr.

The original ten shares (including the one Mayhew held for himself), with the ten shares granted to the respective partners of the original ten proprietors, and the fourteen half or seven whole shares issued later, as above stated, together constituted what have since been known as the twenty-seven original shares, under which all the land of the island, except Quaise or Masquetuck (reserved by Mayhew) and the houselots assigned to each settler, was held in common for many years; and some of it is undivided even to this day. Each whole share carried ownership of one undivided twenty-seventh part of all the common land, which is the foundation of all or nearly all land titles in Nantucket county.

It may be of some interest at this point to note which of the names of these early proprietors have survived on the island. Probably some of the share-holders never came to the island at all, and it is apparent that several of them sold out or severed

their connection with the venture soon after it was established. An examination of the surnames of all the owners of the original twenty-seven shares discloses, after allowing for duplicates, only twenty different names, as follows, the modern spelling being used in each case: Mayhew, Coffin, Macy, Hussey, Swain, Barnard, Greenleaf, Pile, Pike, Starbuck, Smith, Look, Coleman, Bishop, Worth, Stretor, Wyer, Gardner, Folger and Holland. Of these twenty, the names Mayhew, Greenleaf, Pile, Pike, Look, Stretor, Bishop and Holland, eight in all, sooner or later disappeared and are lost sight of. Of the remaining twelve, all are found among the island names today, and most of them are quite common. No actual count has been made, but it is probably safe to say that the Coffins, Folgers and Gardners are the most numerous, with the Swains, Starbucks, Husseys and Macys well represented, and the Barnards, Colemans, Worths and Wyers in considerable numbers. The Smiths, of course, are always with us. The Bunkers, who early appear as land-owners, succeeded to half of the interest of William Pile.

Other characteristic early Nantucket names, not of the original proprietary, are Easton, Mitchell, Paddock (or Paddack), Russell, Ray, Winslow and others, all of which are still found on the island.

CHAPTER III

THE SETTLEMENT AND THE SETTLERS

ALTHOUGH Thomas Macy is usually recognized as 'the first settler,' he was not alone when he took up his residence here. Nor was he, perhaps, the first of the proprietors to visit the island, but he was probably the first to bring his family with him. The Mayhews doubtless came here at some time before they sold, and there is evidence that Peter Folger, who lived on the Vineyard, and possibly Tristram Coffin, as well, came down to look the ground over some time in 1658. Thomas Macy and others, it is believed, spent a short time here in the summer of 1659, but it was not until some time in the autumn of that year, either September or October, that the actual settlement took place, when Thomas Macy, with his wife Sarah and their five children, ranging in age from four to thirteen years, accompanied by Edward Starbuck and Isaac Coleman, then a young boy, embarked at Salisbury in a small boat, and sailing across Massa-

chusetts Bay, round Cape Cod, and across the Sound, landed at the west end of Nantucket.

Though there is documentary proof that Thomas Macy had been fined by the General Court of Massachusetts for harboring Quakers, and though the conditions which led up to that incident may have had some influence with him in inducing him to seek a freer environment, even though it proved to be a wilderness, we are unable to accept the romantic story so charmingly told in Whittier's poem, 'The Exiles,' which is good poetry, but bad history. In the poem 'Goodman Macy' escapes by a rear door of his Salisbury home when the priest and the sheriff come to arrest him, and without further preparation or equipment, flees to the shore, pursued by his would-be captors, and leaping into a 'small light wherry,' wields his oar to such good purpose that they eventually reach Nantucket, where he founds a colony of his own. Nothing is said of the five small children Goodman Thomas is known to have had at that time, of the fact that his alleged offence in furnishing shelter to the Quakers was

committed some time after his purchase, with the other proprietors, of the island of Nantucket from Mayhew, nor of the further fact that five years later he was again living in Salisbury for a short time while settling up his affairs, and was apparently not molested.

Another story related by Silvanus J. Macy, compiler of the 'Genealogy of the Macy Family,' has possibly better claim to credence. Encountering rough weather while crossing the Sound, it is said, the good wife became frightened and twice besought her husband to turn back and seek safety on the mainland. The second time Thomas replied: 'Woman, go below and seek thy God. I fear not the witches on earth or the devils in hell!' As all accounts agree that the craft in which this adventurous voyage was made was an 'open boat,' it is difficult to understand just what the doughty skipper meant when he told his spouse to 'go below,' but he may have used the expression figuratively, in which sense, let us hope, it was obeyed.

They landed safely, at all events, or this story would never have been told — by this writer at least — and with the assist-

ance of the Indians, who were friendly, erected some sort of a house to shelter them for the winter at a point near the shore of Madaket harbor.

Just how this little group of pioneers managed to get through that first winter it is not easy for us to understand. They must have endured no little hardship and privation, and the spring of 1660 must have been welcomed with joy and thanksgiving. It is not likely that they suffered for food, for fish of all kinds, including shell-fish, were probably abundant and easily obtained. Wild fowl and small game, with such salted or smoked meats as they may have been able to bring with them, doubtless supplied their protein food and fats, and from the Indians they may have secured maize and other grains to furnish the carbohydrates, thus making up a balanced ration, according to modern standards. Fuel enough to keep warm and cook their victuals was procurable for the gathering. But if any present-day mother of five small children will try to put herself in Sarah Hopcott Macy's place during those first few months, she will perhaps appreciate her 'modern conveniences' as

never before, and cease to repine over the small discomforts of life. John Macy, the only son of Thomas who reached maturity, was the ancestor of all the Macys in America. At the time of the immigration to Nantucket, he was four years old, so by such a slender thread hung the to-be-or-not-to-be of all the thousands of his posterity on this continent.

Early in the spring of 1660 Edward Starbuck returned to Salisbury to report conditions to the other proprietors, and within a few months some eight or ten families arrived, and by the summer of that year the island was fairly settled by the white race.

Though the first house was built as stated, at Madaket — the location being referred to as a bound in a deed some ten years later as 'the old seller built by Edward Starbuck' — the site of the first permanent settlement was in the vicinity of Capaum Pond, which was then open to the sea, affording a small but safe harbor of refuge for vessels of light draught. The houses extended thence south across the island to the north head of the Hummock Pond and east along the north shore to-

ward the Cliff. Tristram Coffin's house, 'Northam,' was at Capaum, and Thomas Macy's lot was laid out near the Wannacomet Pond, though an old cellar hole near the Reed Pond, some distance to the east of Wannacomet, has been referred to as the site of Thomas Macy's house. Edward Starbuck built near the Hummock Pond, and Nathaniel Starbuck and his wife Mary, daughter of Tristram Coffin, and known as 'the Great Woman,' lived in the same vicinity near the 'Cambridge spring.' Richard Gardner located on or near what is now the Hamblin Farm at the Cliff, and John Gardner's house was at or near Sunset Hill. John Swain must have located very early in the history of the settlement at Polpis. His house, built about 1672, was still standing until within a few years.

At a meeting of the proprietors on July 15, 1661, it was agreed that each houselot 'shall contain sixty rods square to a whole share' (22½ acres) and that each proprietor might choose his location from any part of the common land not already assigned to another.

Though the course of empire does usu-

ally take its way westward, that condition was reversed here, and the general trend seems to have been toward the rising rather than the setting sun. Starting at Madaket, moving thence to Capaum, even before the end of the seventeenth century the growth of the settlement was toward the present site of the town at Wesko (the white stone — spelled also Wesco and Wesquo) on the shores of the larger harbor. This movement was doubtless accelerated by the closing by the sea of the inlet to Capaum Pond some time about the end of the seventeenth or very early in the eighteenth century, but the migration was probably quite gradual, extending over a number of years. New arrivals, for the most part, probably settled at or near Wesko, and the children of the first settlers, as they married and made homes for themselves, turned in that direction. By 1720 or thereabouts the principal community was at the present town site, and the indications are that all the roads running through 'the lots' westward from the town, from the Austin Farm road to the Cliff, were much more 'settled up' than at present. The many old cellar

holes all through this section bear mute witness to the homes which formerly stood there.

The surprising thing, when we come to think of it, is that our ancestors should have chosen any other location for their village than the site of the present town. It would seem to have been natural to settle on the largest and best harbor available, and neither Madaket nor Capaum, at their best, could have offered any advantages to compare with those of Wesco.

The principal occupation of the islanders at first was probably farming — including sheep and cattle husbandry — with such fishing and hunting as was necessary to supply their modest needs. Though much has been said of the fishing industry, it does not seem as if that could have been commercially profitable for some time after the settlement. Most of the settlements in New England at that time were located on or near the coast, and these were well able to supply their own needs, as well as being much more favorably located for trading with the few interior points than were the islanders. Corn or maize, oats and rye, appear to

have been the principal cereals grown, and as early as 1666 or 1667 it was found necessary to erect a grist mill at Wesko Pond, now known as the Lily Pond, which, like all the ponds on the island, was then much larger than at present. Peter Folger was placed in charge as miller, and was granted a half share in the undivided lands as part compensation for his services in that capacity, as well as in that of weaver, surveyor, blacksmith, keeper of the island records, interpreter of the Indian language and various other duties to which his most versatile genius adapted itself. Had the proprietors known that they were employing none other than the grandfather of Benjamin Franklin, his honors would doubtless have been much greater than they saw fit to accord him, but the many-sidedness of the character of our Great Philosopher is more readily understood in the light of his maternal grandfather's accomplishments.

In 1662 occurred the first death on Nantucket — that of Jean, wife of Richard Swain. The first white child born was a daughter to Nathaniel and the afterward celebrated Mary Starbuck, who, when the

younger Mary came into the world, on March 30, 1663, had just passed her eighteenth birthday. The earliest marriage was that of William Worth and Sarah Macy, eldest daughter of Thomas, which occurred on April 11, 1665, the bride being then a spinster of nearly nineteen.

The three most important events in life now having taken place, the little colony may be considered as fairly launched, and from that time on matters progressed much as in other pioneer communities. Man and maid plighted their troth and were joined in wedlock, children were born unto them, and as time went on, one by one the Great Harvester claimed his own. Though we are prone to think of our ancestors as a remarkably healthy and vigorous lot, the most casual study of the genealogies and meagre vital statistics of the early families reveals a surprisingly high infant mortality; and the perusal of diaries and letters of the day shows that even among the adults many mysterious and untimely deaths occurred from causes wherein the diagnosis was, to say the least, decidedly vague. The more we inform ourselves on these points the more

'GULL ISLAND'

we are convinced that only the remarkable fecundity characteristic of the period saved many of these pioneer families from early extinction through natural causes.

A curious custom among these ancestors of ours, and one which survived even down into the nineteenth century, was the usual attendance of a large concourse of female relatives, friends and neighbors on the occasion of a visit from the stork. Whether this was due to a desire on the part of the prospective mother for company during her trial, or that the combined knowledge of many amateur midwives was thought to afford special security, the diarist sayeth not, but following the announcement of an addition to the family circle we almost invariably find some such announcement as 'there were eighteen women here — all stayed to breakfast,' or, again, 'Mother, Sister Susan, Aunt Mary, Cousin Hepsibeth and eleven other women came in, and most of them spent the night.' Far be it from the writer to even remotely suggest that this pleasant social custom might have had any possible connection with the high infant mortality above referred to, but it is

needless to say that such a condition of affairs would hardly be considered in these days as conducive to a favorable accouchement.

Yet another quite general custom in connection with the courtings of the youthful couples was that known as 'bundling,' which also survived to some extent here, as elsewhere in New England, even down to the times within the memory of persons now living. Accounts vary somewhat as to the exact form which this custom assumed at different times and places, and the subject hardly warrants detailed treatment in a work of this character — except as it reflects one of the rather interesting phases of contemporary manners — but the curious reader is respectfully referred to some of the more intimate chronicles of early colonial days, such, for example, as Washington Irving's 'Knickerbocker History,' for more extended information and particulars.

CHAPTER IV

POLITICS AND PATENTS

In 1664 Charles II, then King of England, made a new grant to his brother, the Duke of York (afterwards James II, of inglorious memory) of a considerable part of the lands which his martyred father, the first Charles, had formerly bestowed upon the Earl of Sterling. This new grant specifically included 'the several small islands called Nantukes or Nantucket.' The Duke appointed Francis Lovelace Governor of New York, and the latter, in May, 1670, ordered all claimants to lands in Nantucket to appear before him within four months and prove their titles. It was not until a year later, however, in May, 1671, that Tristram Coffin and Thomas Macy were appointed to go to New York and represent the proprietors. A new patent was thereupon issued to these two 'for and on behalf of themselves and their associates,' the consideration this time being 'four barrels of merchantable codfish to be delivered in New York annually,' and a condition being that the proprietors

must purchase the lands from the Indians, after which the Crown would ratify and confirm the titles so obtained. The town was then incorporated, and in 1673 Governor Lovelace gave it the name of Sherburne, by which it was known down to 1795.

In 1672 Captain John Gardner, of Salem, a brother of Richard Gardner, who had been a member of the colony since 1665, was invited by the proprietors to come to the island and 'set up the trade for the taking of codfish.' He was granted half a share of land on his agreement to stay for a period of three years. He remained until his death in 1706. John Gardner was a man of strong and forceful personality, and he soon became one of the most prominent men in the settlement. In 1673 Governor Lovelace appointed him 'Captain and Chief Military Officer of the Ffoot Company,' and he was at various times thereafter Selectman, Treasurer, Chief Magistrate, and Deputy to New York.

Before Gardner's arrival Tristram Coffin had been the leading spirit politically, and little was done or undertaken by the

settlers without his sanction and approval. Through his five sons, Tristram, Jr., James, Peter, John and Stephen, and his two sons-in-law, Stephen Greenleaf and Nathaniel Starbuck, all of whom were share-holders, Tristram controlled a very considerable interest in the island lands. Being of an aggressive and dominating — not to say domineering — nature, as well as a man of great ability, his influence had heretofore been stronger than that of any other one member of the proprietary. Moreover, he had the backing and support of the Mayhews, who still retained their interest in Nantucket, though they lived, for the most part, at the Vineyard. It was the apparent purpose of the Coffins and the Mayhews, with their adherents, to control the political affairs of the island by virtue of their holdings of land, and it was their dream to set up here a landowners' aristocracy, showing little consideration for newcomers or those who were not proprietors.

Naturally enough, very soon after John Gardner came he and Tristram Coffin locked horns. Captain Gardner's ideas were much too liberal and democratic to

suit the plans of the Coffins, and Tristram appears to have viewed with alarm the rapid growth of his new rival's power and popularity. So even thus early in the history of this little settlement there began the world-old cleavage between the conservatives and the radicals.

John Gardner soon formed a close offensive and defensive alliance with Peter Folger, who was probably the best-educated man on the island, and throughout all the long struggle which followed these two stood shoulder to shoulder. In the beginning, Thomas Macy, his son-in-law, William Worth, and his close friend, Edward Starbuck, together with the Colemans, the Bunkers, Nathaniel Wyer and others, sided with the Gardners, while the Swains, the Husseys, Nathaniel Barnard and others, including Edward Starbuck's son Nathaniel, who had married Tristram Coffin's daughter Mary, were aligned with the Coffins. The Gardner party were slightly in the majority numerically, but the Coffin faction were firmly intrenched, very determined, and probably better organized, as is usually the case with the conservative element.

Under the Lovelace patent the freeholders were required to name two men, one of whom the Governor should appoint Chief Magistrate. At the first such election, in 1673, the names of Edward Starbuck and Richard Gardner were submitted, and the Governor chose the latter. At the same time he appointed Captain John commander of the Foot Company, which was the chief military office. The Coffin party, naturally, were not overpleased to have two Gardners occupying the two highest offices, and so began the long fight.

From July, 1673, to October, 1674, New York was again held by the Dutch, during which period Nantucket apparently governed herself without much outside interference. After the return of the English Governor Andros succeeded Lovelace, and another new deal all round became the political order of the day.

Whenever a meeting was held on the island and a vote passed which met with the disapproval of the Coffins, it was noted on the records that 'Mr. Tristram Coffin enters his decent.' This was usually followed by all or most of the other mem-

bers of his party entering their 'decent,' also, but Tristram has been well called 'the Great Dissenter.' The Coffins believed that the whole share men should have two votes to only one for the half-share men and that land ownership should be the only basis for the franchise, while the Gardners stood for equal voting power for each free-man in all public affairs, regardless of the amount of land he owned.

Each of the two factions soon began bombarding New York with charges and counter charges, appeals, complaints and memorials, each setting forth the petitioners' grievances, and demanding redress. The first round was won by the Coffins, when, on November 7, 1674, Andros issued an order authorizing the 'Governor or Governors and assistants of both the Islands Martin's Vineyard and Nantucket (or one of them) . . . to call to account and punish all such persons as have been ringleaders or capital offenders and transgressors against the established government of his Royal Highness . . . to secure the offenders and to send them hither by the first conveyance.' This was in response to an appeal from Coffin and

Mayhew, and was hailed by them as a settler for the Gardners. Tristram Coffin also complained that the records were withheld from inspection, and the Governor ordered that all persons should 'have a legal and free recourse thereunto.' Next Coffin and Mayhew complained that tradesmen and seamen were ordering the affairs of the town, admitting, however, that such were in the majority in numbers but not in property, and adding this quaint sporting phrase: 'Neither can we have any redress, they affirming that every card they play is an ace and every ace a trump, and that we have no remedy in law.'

On December 28, 1674, the Gardner faction, being still in control, fined Stephen Hussey for contempt of authority in saying to Captain John: 'Meddle with your own business. I gave Edward Cartwright authority to let his hogs run on the Common.'

In 1676 Thomas Macy and his son-in-law, William Worth, changed front and sided with the Coffins. Thomas Macy was then Chief Magistrate, but his commission had expired, and his successor not

having been appointed, he continued to hold court. The Coffin party threw in their lot with him, thus regaining control of affairs; William Worth was chosen clerk, and John Gardner and Peter Folger were arbitrarily disfranchised and refused any participation in the affairs of the town. Peter Folger was arrested for contempt of His Majesty's authority and for 'contemptious carrag.' Peter was very stubborn, and refused to answer questions put to him by his persecutors, which doubtless angered them more than if he had spoken his mind freely. He was bound over in the sum of twenty pounds for his appearance at the Court of Assizes in New York, and in default thereof was committed to jail, where he remained in durance vile (very vile, according to his complaint to the Governor) the greater part of the time for over a year.

The Coffins, now holding the whip hand, used their power in an arbitrary and high-handed manner. Tobias Coleman, Eleazur Folger and the latter's wife Sarah, who was Richard Gardner's daughter, were all arrested for no other reason, apparently, than that they had criticized the action of

the court in the case of Peter. Tobias and Eleazur were fined, and Sarah was 'reproved and admonished.'

A demand having been made upon Peter Folger to deliver up the records of the court, which had been in his custody as clerk, he refused to comply therewith on the ground that he did not recognize the authority of the court as now constituted. Whether he hid the book so carefully that he was unable to find it afterward himself, or whether it was lost or destroyed, is not known, but from that day to this the book has never been found, and its absence leaves a serious gap in the otherwise fairly complete early court records of the settlement.

Meantime trouble was threatened with the Indians, who had a high regard for John Gardner and Peter Folger, and resented the treatment accorded them by the Coffin faction. The latter, though growing uneasy, would not relent, but sought to bring matters to an issue by pressing still further their persecution of Gardner and Folger. Folger was fined five pounds, remanded to jail and disfranchised. Captain John was arrested on a

charge of 'burning a deed of sale,' and his bail was fixed at fifty pounds. He was ordered to pay a fine of ten pounds; also that 'he receive a sharp admonition,' and he also was disfranchised.

Tristram Coffin deposed that when his enemy was brought into court 'he sot down on a chest where I sat. . . . I spake to him and told him that I was very sorry that he did behave himself. The aforesaid Captain John Gardner replied and said: "I know my business and it may be that some of those that have meddled with me had better have eaten fier."'

It is recorded that Captain Gardner refusing to pay the fine, the constable took 'a haluef a barrel of Rom.' Later he took 'eight cattle and a fat sheep.' Gardner simply refused to recognize the authority of the court, pending a decision on his appeal to the Governor. Both he and Peter Folger had repeatedly appealed to New York, claiming that the court which had committed these acts was not a legal tribunal, and asking redress.

Finally, in August, 1677, Governor Andros ordered a suspension of all further proceedings, and after a hearing, at which

all parties were represented, he ordered the cases remitted to him. Later he served formal notice on the Nantucket court that 'Capt. John Gardner's fine and disfranchisement is void and null according to the Governor's order and Peter Folger's also.'

Mayhew and Coffin were furious, and they even went so far as openly to defy the governor, by sending the constable to seize more of Gardner's cattle to satisfy the judgment. But the Captain had won, not only with the Governor, but with his fellow-townsmen, and he was soon restored to favor. At a town meeting held in January, 1678, an apology was voted to both Gardner and Folger, and their disfranchisement was 'made utterly void and null.' Poor old Tristram continued to 'enter his decent,' but his power was broken and from that time on John Gardner could afford to be magnanimous, as he afterward proved himself.

John Gardner was appointed Chief Magistrate in 1680, and in the same year he was chosen to represent the town at New York, where, by order of the Governor, he was fully vindicated, and the

property which had been taken from him was ordered restored.

During Tristram Coffin's term as Chief Magistrate in 1678 he had taken charge of the wreck of a French ship loaded with hides and had sold the property. In 1680, a dispute having arisen as to the amount due from Coffin to the Governor on account of this transaction, John Gardner used his influence with Andros to have the claim against his old enemy materially reduced, thus earning Tristram's gratitude and forgiveness at last; and so the long and bitter contest ended.

Different students of the early records disagree as to which of the two factions was more nearly in the right in this famous controversy. Messrs. Alexander Starbuck and Henry B. Worth, both reliable and authoritative historians, both keen for facts, each perhaps better qualified than any one except the other to pass judgment on the merits of the case, both obtaining their evidence from the same sources, took exactly opposite views, Starbuck favoring the Coffin, and Worth the Gardner side.

When such eminent authorities disagree

the present writer does not venture an opinion, but will gladly leave it to future students to take sides or remain neutral as their interpretation of the evidence seems to warrant. There would seem to be little doubt that the Coffins, backed by Mayhew, held the conservative, aristocratic viewpoint, while the Gardners and Peter Folger favored a more liberal, democratic attitude. So it may be that, as one leans to the one or the other of these theories of the function of government, his view may be unconsciously influenced, since we are quite apt to find — in history as elsewhere — pretty much what we are looking for.

Tristram Coffin died in October, 1681. In 1686 his grandson, Jethro Coffin, married John Gardner's daughter Mary, and the now famous 'Oldest House' was built for the young couple on Sunset Hill on land donated by the bride's father, the lumber having been sawed at the mill in New Hampshire of Peter Coffin, father of the groom.

This record, which appears to be well authenticated, concerning the lumber used in the 'oldest house' casts an interesting

side-light on the tradition, which has long existed and still persists, that the island was more or less heavily wooded within historic times. It has been claimed that some at least of the early dwellings were built of native timber, but there seems to be very little ground for such a belief and much, of which this is but one example, to prove the contrary.

The Duke of York having succeeded his brother as James II in 1681, had appointed Thomas Dongan to succeed Andros as Governor of New York, and in 1687 still another patent was issued to the Nantucketers, confirming their land titles. This is known as the Dongan patent. It is recorded in the Nantucket Registry of Deeds, and is considered the actual starting point for all land titles in the county. It is a quaint but lengthy and complicated document. A note at the end states that 'the Attorney General has perused this document,' etc., but it is fair to presume that that functionary did something more than peruse it, for it is an excellent example of platitudinous ponderosity and legal phraseology at its best — or worst. The consideration provided in the Don-

gan patent was '6 kentals of good merchantable fish' for the land already acquired from the Indians, and for any lands acquired thereafter the Governor was to receive annually 'one lamb or two shillings.'

By an act of Parliament passed in 1692 all the islands Mayhew purchased from Forrett in 1641, including Nantucket, were transferred to the Province of Massachusetts.

CHAPTER V

WHALING AND QUAKERISM

THE exact connection between the two prominent features in the story of Nantucket which head this chapter may not be apparent at first sight, but it is an interesting fact to which, so far as the writer is aware, particular attention has never before been called, that the two seem somehow to have been part and parcel of each other, and the influence of each upon the other in the development of the community and its people was such that they are and forever will be inextricably intermingled and interwoven in our history.

Whaling antedated Quakerism on the island by a generation, but Quakerism outlived the whaling by about an equal period. Each reached its maximum development at about the same time, and each lasted almost exactly two centuries — whaling from 1670 to 1870, and Quakerism from 1700 to 1900, roughly speaking. At no time were all Nantucket's active workers engaged in the whaling industry; nor were all the population at

any given time Quakers. Other industries and other religions flourished throughout all our history, but the fact remains that these two great factors in the industrial and religious life, respectively, of these islanders waxed and waned together, and the connection between the two being presumably thus established, it would seem eminently proper to treat them together in one chapter. The desire to preserve, as far as possible, the chronological sequence of events in each chapter, rather than to devote separate chapters to separate occurrences during substantially the same period, furnishes an additional reason for such treatment of these subjects.

The capture of the first whale by the Nantucketers seems to have been more or less of an accident. Obed Macy says:

> A whale of the kind called 'scrag' came in to the harbor and continued there three days. This excited the curiosity of the people and led them to devise measures to prevent his return out of the harbor. They accordingly invented and caused to be wrought for them a harpoon with which they attacked and killed the whale.

No date is given by the historian for

this event, but whenever it happened, it was probably not the first experience of the islanders in the procuring of whale oil, for there is evidence that from the first an occasional dead or 'drift' whale, as it was called, had been saved, and the oil extracted; and even before the white men came the Indians seem to have secured such prizes occasionally.

On May 4, 1672, an agreement was entered into between the proprietors and one James Loper, by which the latter did 'Ingage to carry on a design of Whale Citching,' for which he was to be granted 'ten acres of land in som convenant place that he may Chuse in,' etc. It does not appear that this contract was ever carried out, but it is an interesting fact that two different Nantucket ships afterward bore the names of 'Loper' and 'James Loper,' respectively.

Soon after this lookout stations were established at various points along the south side of the island, and men were kept on watch for whales. Several writers have stated that such lookouts were maintained at the east end of the island also, though Zaccheus Macy, in his letter to

the Massachusetts Historical Society, dated November 2, 1792, mentions only two such stations, one at the South Head of Hummock Pond, and one at Weweeder Pond. He speaks of 'a great number of whale houses' at each of these two points, 'with a mast raised for a look out, with holes bored through and sticks put in like a ladder, to go up.' Zaccheus Macy was born in 1713, and was therefore seventy-nine years old when this was written. He was undoubtedly the best authority on historical matters connected with the island in his day, and a very remarkable man withal, being for fifty years or more the principal surgeon and bone-setter on the island, though he had never studied medicine. He is said to have performed over two thousand surgical operations, for none of which would he accept payment. J. Hector St. John de Crèvecœur, however, in his 'Letters from an American Farmer,' which was reprinted early in the present century, writing from Nantucket in 1777, describes a whale-house which was then standing at Siasconset, and another at Sesachacha has been mentioned.

When a whale was sighted from these

lookouts one or more small boats, manned usually by a mixed crew of whites and Indians, put off and attacked it with harpoons. If they succeeded in killing the whale, the carcass was towed ashore and 'cut in' on the beach, the blubber being tried out at the whale houses.

Quoting again from Zaccheus Macy:

> In 1690 the Nantucketers, finding their neighbors on Cape Cod more proficient in the art of killing whales and extracting the oil than themselves, sent thither and employed Ichabod Paddock to remove to the island and instruct them on these points.

Nantucketers have sometimes been gently twitted, not to say taunted, by their brothers of Cape Cod concerning this Paddock incident. The 'Capies' have been somewhat inclined to gloat over the fact that Nantucket had to borrow a whaleman from them to teach her the trick. The islanders, so far from denying the soft impeachment, are, on the contrary, rather proud of the fact that their ancestors were so enterprising as to seek the best instruction possible, wherever it might be found, in the pursuit of a busi-

ness at which they very soon excelled all others — not only on Cape Cod, but throughout the world. A century later Nantucketers were offered the highest inducements (which some of them accepted) by England and France, then the two leading maritime nations on the globe, to coach their whalemen in the most improved methods of prosecuting a craft which Nantucket had made almost exclusively her own; and while the Cape Codders were, for the most part, yet content to eke out a precarious living by shore and bank fishing for cod and haddock, their island brothers were waxing fat and prosperous from the oleaginous proceeds of all the seven seas.

It has been the custom with many uninformed writers and speakers to refer in a general way to the first settlers of Nantucket as Quakers. Even some good Nantucketers, who ought to know better, often talk rather loosely about 'our Quaker ancestors who settled the island,' and stories have been written putting the Friends' language in the mouths of characters supposed to have lived on the island in the 1680's or thereabouts. As a matter

of fact, most of the original settlers were of either the Baptist or Presbyterian persuasion, and, if we except an occasional isolated case, it was more than a generation after the settlement before there were any Quakers on the island at all, while it was well into the eighteenth century before this remarkable sect gained any very strong foothold among the people.

During the years 1698, 1699 and 1700 several active and prominent members of the Society of Friends, including some of the more eloquent preachers of the time, visited the island and sowed the seed which was to take root and grow into a mighty tree of the faith, until in time it became the predominant religious influence in the community, holding sway over the lives and actions of a large part of the population for a century and a half or more, and lingering in the persons of one or two adherents down to the very close of the nineteenth century.

So numerous and powerful was the organization at the period of its maximum strength in Nantucket that it may well be doubted if, in the whole history of the movement, the Society could ever have

claimed so large a proportion of the population of any other community of equal size anywhere in the world.

Among the more famous preachers of this faith who had most to do with its early and successful establishment here were Thomas Chalkley, Thomas Story and John Richardson, all from England, but there were many others almost equally influential who came from Rhode Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and elsewhere.

It was a most fortunate circumstance for the cause of Quakerism that its advocates made an early convert of Mary Starbuck, 'the Great Woman' before referred to, then in the middle fifties, the mother of ten children, and at the height of her power and influence in the little island community. She was a truly remarkable woman, loved, respected and looked up to by all for her strength of character, breadth of mind and noble qualities of heart and soul, and the influence she exerted over the lives and actions of her fellow townsmen and women has hardly a parallel in our colonial history. Once convinced of its truth, she embraced the new faith with character-

istic ardor and enthusiasm, and soon became herself one of its most celebrated advocates and preachers, making many converts. For several years meetings were held in the great fore-room of her home, known as 'Parliament House,' situated on what is now known as Island View farm, between the Maxcy's and the North Head of the Hummock ponds. This house was later removed to the present site of the town, and the house now standing on the northerly corner of Pine and School Streets is said to be the original 'Parliament House.'

The first Friends Society on the island was formed in 1704 and they built their first meeting house in 1711. It so happens that the North Congregational Society was formed in that same year, and they built their first meeting house west of the town, to the north of No-bottom Pond. This latter building was later removed to its present site, in the rear of and connected with the present North Congregational Church, being always spoken of as 'the Old North Vestry.'

The shore whaling, as pursued in small boats, continued actively for more than

half a century after its establishment, and spasmodically for a much longer period. It reached its maximum about 1726, in which year eighty-six whales were taken in this manner by the islanders. But even much earlier than this small sloops had been built and fitted out to cruise further off-shore among the shoals which surround the island. These voyages at first lasted only a few days, which gradually extended to weeks, and finally, as the vessels grew larger, even to months. At first, whenever a whale was taken, the blubber was removed, stored in hogsheads, and the vessel returned to port, where the oil was extracted in try-works erected along the shore of the harbor. One such try-works existed for many years near the present location of the Nantucket Yacht Club. This little strip of beach between the present Steamboat Wharf and the Brant Point marshes has always been known as 'the Clean Shore' (with the accent on the 'clean') but it must have been anything but clean in those days, for whale blubber decomposes quickly, and some of the cargoes brought in must have been in a more or less advanced stage of putrefaction.

The odor arising from such operations must have been far from agreeable, especially when the wind was from the east, but there was no Board of Health in those days, and noses were apparently less sensitive than today — at least where profit was at stake. So the good housewives probably kept the doors and windows closed, and endured as best they could without complaint.

About 1708 the Nantucket Friends joined the Rhode Island 'Quarterly Meeting,' and in 1711, as stated, they built their first meeting house, a short distance southeast of the ancient burial ground northwest of the present town. This was enlarged a few years later by an addition twenty feet in length.

Prior to 1712 all the whales taken were of the species known as 'right' whales, but in that year one Christopher Hussey, being out with his crew in a small boat, was blown off-shore in a gale, and running into a school of sperm whales, succeeded in killing one of them, which he brought home. It was this event, undoubtedly, which gave such an impetus to the off-shore whaling, for sperm oil was much

THE CHASE — A SPERM-WHALING SCENE
From an old print

more valuable than that obtained from the right whale, and for a hundred and fifty years thereafter your true Nantucket whaleman was out for 'sparmocity,' as he called it. Other whalemen, while they preferred sperm, were glad to get either, and Nantucket captains doubtless carried their preference too far at times; but when there was a chance to get sperm it paid to wait for it, and they knew it. Whalebone, or baleen, obtained from the jaw of the right whale only, was of comparatively little value in the early days, though it became a very important part of the product later on.

By 1715, six sloops were engaged in the off-shore whaling, and ten years later the number had increased to twenty-five. These vessels were very small, rarely exceeding fifty tons burthen, but as whales became scarcer and more shy they extended their voyages further and further until, in the 1730's, they were cruising as far north as Davis straits, and as far south as the Bahamas. In 1720 the first shipment of oil to England was made, via Boston, by the ship Hanover, owned by Paul Starbuck and commanded by

William Chadder. In 1723 the Straight Wharf was built to accommodate the rapidly growing fleet.

In 1731, the Friends, who were increasing rapidly in numbers, built a new meeting house at the corner of Main and Saratoga Streets, on the lot known still as 'the Quaker burying ground.'

From this time on the organization continued to flourish until it claimed a majority of the descendants of the original settlers and a considerable part of the new comers. Quakers from 'off-island' were doubtless attracted to the place by the favorable conditions afforded to persons of their faith, and many converts were made from among 'the world's people,' so that, notwithstanding the large industrial immigration of non-Quakers from the mainland as the whaling industry grew and prospered, it is probably safe to say that late in the eighteenth century fully one half of the entire population of four or five thousand people attended one or the other of the several meetings which had by that time been established in different parts of the town.

The far-reaching effect of this peculiar

form of belief upon the lives of these people is difficult to overestimate. More than almost any other form of Christian theology, Quakerism entered into the daily life of its adherents, exerting a marked influence upon their every act and thought. Its keynote was simplicity. Plain living, high thinking, unworldliness and humility were its tenets. There was no definite statement of doctrine to which those who adopted the faith were expected to subscribe. They believed in the 'inner light,' and that 'though in the world, they were not of it.' They wore plain clothes, of subdued and neutral colors, though of the best quality of material they could afford, and they forswore all attempt at ornament or display either in their attire, their homes, or their meeting-houses — even to the extent of not using paint, except where it was necessary for the preservation of the wood. All who were not Friends were 'the world's people.'

As originally expounded and taught by its leaders, no more beautiful, unselfish and altogether admirable religion has ever been offered for the consolation of

mankind and the guidance of his conduct in this world. But — there is always a but — they took too little account of human nature, and the natural desires and impulses thereof, not to mention its weaknesses and frailties. They were far too rigid and severe in their discipline, seeking to control the acts and motives of their members in the most minute affairs of their daily lives. Music was tabooed, the spinet was 'the devil's instrument'; the least personal adornment, even by the very young, was frowned upon; marriage outside the sect was absolutely forbidden; any unseemly evidence of joy or gayety was sinful, and so on. The slightest infraction of this rigid code was met with punishment in some form, and the unrepentant were liable to be 'read-out-of-meeting,' which had all the terrors for the faithful that excommunication may hold for the Roman Catholic.

As might be expected, such a power, vested in a few, was often abused, or at least arbitrarily exercised, and the result was inevitable. Gradually the more independent and progressive spirits grew away from the organization, which lacked

the flexibility and adaptability to modify its demands upon them to meet the changed conditions, and its numbers dwindled to comparative insignificance.

CHAPTER VI

GROWTH AND PROSPERITY

At the beginning of the second quarter of the eighteenth century the white population of Nantucket was nearly a thousand souls, and during the next fifty years the increase was steady and continuous, with few if any set-backs.

The Quakers were gradually gaining the ascendancy in the councils of the island, and their habits of thrift and frugality, combined with untiring industry, contributed much to the prosperity and progress of the community. Their moral code was of the highest, they stood for peace and harmony as opposed to contention and controversy, and though shrewd in business and with an eye for the main chance, their actions were, as a rule, fair and honorable, and they set a very high standard of commercial probity and fair dealing. On all public questions they were firm for what they believed to be right, and one of the very earliest anti-slavery publications in our history was

issued here in 1733 in the form of a pamphlet by Elihu Coleman, a minister of the Society of Friends, entitled: 'A Testimony Against That Anti-Christian Practice of Making Slaves of Men.' The Quakers very early took a firm stand against slavery, and in their quiet but effective way did much to aid and further the cause of abolition in after years.

The whaling industry continued to thrive and prosper, affording employment for hundreds of seamen and many mechanics, both afloat and ashore. As the ships increased in size and the voyages became longer, try-works were built on the ships, and the oil was extracted at sea. This necessitated carrying many casks, which were stowed in 'shooks' in the hold of the vessel, and set up and filled as whales were taken. The demand for coopers thus became very great, and this was one of the most important trades on the island. Every ship carried a cooper, and there were several coopers' shops along the water front of the town. Carpenters, caulkers, rope-makers, riggers, sail-makers, blacksmiths and other mechanics all found plenty of work, and out-

fitters, grocers, ship-chandlers and other tradesmen flourished.

From its earliest days whaling was conducted on the share basis, each member of the ship's crew, from the captain down to the boy, receiving a portion of the profits of the voyage, or a 'lay,' as it was called, based on his rank and experience — the owners of the ship taking their return on their capital in the same way. This co-operative system, which is but even now being introduced experimentally with great caution and many misgivings into general industrial and commercial pursuits ashore, long ago proved its worth among the whalemen. It appealed to one of the strongest of human motives, the desire for gain and advancement, and it gave a wonderful stimulus to every man on the ship to give the best that was in him for the common cause. Owing to this incentive to ambition the whaleman was ever a better man than the merchantman. A successful voyage meant plenty of spending money for all hands — 'greasy luck,' it was called — and if perchance, as of course sometimes happened, little or no profit resulted from a voyage — well, a

man could always ship again, and the next time he might strike it rich. This system had much to commend it, and it undoubtedly contributed much to the cultivation of those habits of independent thinking and self-reliance which have always characterized these islanders, being in that respect a big improvement over the wage system. The life offered plenty of adventure and excitement, and unlimited opportunities for advancement to the ambitious and industrious. It was no unusual thing, after a few successful voyages, for a youngster still in the early twenties to get command of a ship and secure a big 'lay.'

In the later days of the industry, as the chances of profitable voyages became more dubious, while opportunities for profitable employment ashore improved, the class of men who manned the whalers was of a much lower grade than in the 'palmy days.' Many of the crews were made up of 'shanghaied' drunks, derelicts and even criminals, and sad tales are told of the methods of discipline used by brutal mates to control these unruly sailors and break in the greenhorns.

According to no less an authority than Benjamin Franklin, it was the Nantucket whalemen who first put the Gulf Stream on the map. He says: 'The Nantucket whalemen, being extremely well acquainted with the Gulph Stream, its course, strength and extent, by their constant practice of whaling along the edges of it from their island to the Bahamas, this draft of that stream was obtained of one of them, Captain Timothy Folger, and caused to be engraved on the old chart for the benefit of navigation by B. Franklin.'

Quanaty Hill, better known now as 'the Bank,' on the easterly side of Orange Street, and which formerly extended much farther to the eastward across what is now Union Street, was removed during the 1730's, the material taken away being used to fill the flats and low lands along the harbor front, thus making several acres of new land.

The first regularly established minister on the island was the Reverend Timothy White, who began his pastorate of the Congregational Society in 1732, continuing in that capacity, and also serving

as schoolmaster, for a period of about twenty-five years.

In 1745 the Nantucket merchants made their first shipment of oil direct to England. Prior to that time they had been dependent on the Boston shipping men for this service, and the Bostonians had reaped a handsome profit, not only on the oil so shipped, but also on the return cargoes of hemp, iron, hardware and other manufactures which they resold to the Nantucketers — thus 'getting it going and coming,' as the saying now is. This first venture proving successful, the saving effected encouraged the shippers to repeat the experiment, with the result that they soon established a thriving trade between the island and the mother country, to their mutual advantage and profit.

But all Nantucketers were not engaged in whaling, even at this period of her history. More and more of the lands were being enclosed and cultivated, and though crops were not large in proportion to the labor involved, they were reasonably sure, and a ready market was at hand for more than could be produced. Several wind-

mills had been erected for grinding their corn, as well as fulling mills, sawmills and other manufactories. The 'Old Mill' now standing was built in 1746. There were at one time four such mills on the 'Mill Hills,' southwest of the town. The fishing stages at Siasconset and Sesachacha, which had been established early in this eighteenth century, were active and busy places during the seasons when the cod, haddock, and pollock were to be caught on the shoals off-shore, and great quantities of these fish were cured and sold in the town, supplied to the whalers, or shipped to the mainland.

Sheep raising had from a very early date been an important industry, the great extent of suitable grazing land being favorable to the business. During the latter half of the eighteenth century the flocks numbered from twelve to fifteen thousand, and the output of wool and mutton was by no means inconsiderable. The sheep were all on open range on the commons, requiring little or no shepherding or care, and each owner was allowed to keep as many as the number of sheep commons he owned or controlled in the

undivided lands. Private 'earmarks' distinguished the sheep of each owner. The annual round-up, washing and shearing was the grand social event of the year on the island.

The big 'Shearing' was held in June, and the whole town turned out for the occasion, and drove, rode, or walked to the shearing pens, which were built near one or the other of the ponds, the best known one being near the southerly end of Miacomet Pond, at what is now called 'Shearpen Hill.' The sheep on the Western commons were washed in what was known as 'the Western Washing Pond,' now called the Wannacomet. While the men worked at the washing and shearing, the womenfolks prepared and set out substantial repasts of hearty food and home-made delicacies against the time when the workers rested from their labors at the nooning. The occasion was a regular 'Donnybrook Fair.' Itinerant musicians, fakirs, jugglers, sweetmeat vendors, and other adventurers came to the island, and all the usual features and accessories of a rural event where a crowd is sure to assemble, were in evidence. For once in the year

even the staid and solemn Quakers relaxed a trifle from their wonted rigid demeanor, and joined mildly in the revelry of the world's people. Sailors home from a voyage, with money to spend and ready for any kind of amusement or excitement, contributed largely to the gayety of the occasion, and there was much sparking and sweethearting with the island maidens, all arrayed in their best bibs and tuckers. These annual festivals survived well into the nineteenth century, and were remembered and described with much zest by many of the elderly people in the writer's boyhood days. A most interesting and realistic description of one of these events may be found in James C. Hart's novel of Nantucket life, 'Miriam Coffin, or the Whale Fishermen.'

Brant Point lighthouse, the first built upon the island and the second established in the United States, was erected in 1746 by private funds supplied by the shipowners, who maintained it for some years, until it was ceded to the town, which continued its operation until it was taken over by the Government in 1791. The two towers now standing are the fourth and

fifth respectively which have been built on this point since the first light was established.

During the year 1755 three Nantucket whalers, with their crews, totalling about forty men, were lost off the Grand Banks, and in the following year three more met a similar fate in the same locality. In the following year, which was the period of the French and Indian Wars, six more ships were captured by the French and taken as prizes to France, where their crews were imprisoned, only a few of the men ever reaching home again. These losses proved a serious blow to the island's chief industry. The loss of twelve good ships, with upward of one hundred and fifty men, in a period of less than two years, might well have discouraged the whalemen. Shortly after this (in 1760) George III came to the throne, and England inaugurated that pig-headed colonial policy which finally culminated in the American Revolution. One of the first acts was to put a substantial bounty upon oil obtained by whalers from the home ports. This stimulated the London whalers for a time, but naturally to the great

detriment of the colonies, and especially of Nantucket, which produced more oil than all the other American whaling ports combined. But even such serious handicaps as these proved only a temporary set-back, for nothing could long deter these enterprising people from the prosecution of a business in which they now excelled all others. New markets were sought and obtained, larger vessels were built, some reaching the mammoth proportions of one hundred tons or more, and new whaling grounds were explored and opened up. In 1763 the waters of Africa were invaded, and the 'Guinea Coast' proved a popular cruising ground. About 1765 many of the whalers made good catches round the Azores, and others were doing well at the same time to the eastward of the Newfoundland Banks in the North Atlantic.

There were seventy-eight vessels engaged in the business from Nantucket in 1764, and the population at that time was well over three thousand. It was in that year that the great plague or pestilence was visited upon the Indians, reducing their numbers from three hundred and

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THE TOWN FROM THE HARBOR
From an early photograph

fifty-eight in the autumn of 1764 to only one hundred and thirty-six in the following spring. The exact nature of this epidemic has never been definitely determined, but for some reason the whites appear to have been immune.

In 1773 ships Dartmouth, Eleanor and Beaver sailed from Nantucket for London with cargoes of oil. After discharging the oil, they were laden with tea for Boston, and on arrival there, that rather famous little social affair since known as 'the Boston Tea Party' was celebrated on these ships. The Dartmouth and Beaver were owned in Nantucket and the latter was commanded by a Nantucketer, Captain Hezekiah Coffin.

One of the richest whaling grounds discovered up to that time was located off the coast of Brazil in 1774, and for long thereafter the whalemen talked of the 'Bra-zeel Banks,' and of the wonderful whaling to be had there.

By 1775 the Nantucket whaling fleet had grown to one hundred and fifty ships and vessels, employing over two thousand seamen, and producing about thirty thousand barrels of sperm and four thousand

barrels of whale oil annually. The population of the island had grown to more than forty-five hundred souls, and they were a happy and industrious people, making rapid progress in all the arts of civilization and not a few of its graces. Every one who wanted work could get it, there was no want and little actual poverty, and the place was known throughout the civilized world as a town of rapidly growing importance.

Then came the American Revolution!

CHAPTER VII

TROUBLOUS TIMES

WHAT the people of Nantucket suffered during the war of the American colonies for independence can never be fully understood or appreciated — much less described. The privations they endured, the almost complete destruction of their shipping, which was their main source of livelihood, the lack of not only food, but at times of practically all the ordinary necessities of a reasonably comfortable existence, the terrible loss of life at sea, and worse still, the prolonged sufferings and lingering deaths of many of the seamen in the loathsome British prison ships, the anxiety and mental agony of those who remained at home, find few parallels in modern history.

The Revolution lasted about eight years, and during that time one hundred and thirty-four Nantucket ships, with their cargoes and crews, were captured by the British, while fifteen more vessels

were lost at sea. The actual loss of life as a direct result of the war has never been accurately determined, but it has been estimated as high as sixteen hundred, or more than one third the total population at the outbreak of hostilities. It is known that at least twelve hundred Nantucket seamen were killed or captured by the British. So far as the property loss is concerned, the shipping destroyed, lost or captured probably represented a much larger investment of capital than all the buildings on the island, for one ship, even a small one, costs the price of many good houses, and Nantucket at that time owned a ship for every three or four houses.

Food was at times so scarce that a considerable part of the population, if not actually at the point of starvation, rarely had enough to eat, and hunger was the chronic condition with many. There is a quaint old expression, still current to some extent on the island, which illustrates the state of affairs better than anything which might be written on this point. It is related that during the worst time a man named Meader called on a neighbor to borrow a hammer. When asked what

he wanted it for, he replied: 'To knock out my teeth with; I've got no further use for 'em!' Meader may have been something of a wag, or he may have exaggerated a bit, but to this day if an old time Nantucketer does not want a thing, he is apt to say: 'I've got no more use for it than Meader had for his teeth.'[1]

There has been an occasional disposition in certain quarters to criticize the Nantucketers of that period for attempting to make terms with the British authorities, and to secure immunity from attack by offering to pledge the neutrality of the island in the controversy. It has even been said that the islanders were disloyal to the cause of liberty, and that their record is one to be ashamed of. Let us examine the charge calmly and dispassionately before passing a hasty judgment.

It is a well-known fact, though only recently generally recognized and admitted, that at the outbreak of the

[1] It has been called to the writer's attention that this Meader incident probably happened in the War of 1812, rather than during the Revolution. But it would have been equally applicable to conditions in either war, as will appear later.

Revolution and for a considerable time thereafter there was an honest difference of opinion in the colonies between perfectly sincere, conscientious and worthy people as to the wisdom of open rebellion against British rule. To many of the colonists, who hoped and believed that the desired results might be attained by other methods, the thought of fighting the mother country was abhorrent. These people called themselves 'Loyalists.' They were called 'Tories' by the independence-at-any-price faction, who called themselves 'Patriots,' while the Loyalists dubbed all who disagreed with them 'rebels.' The situation as it existed, say in the spring of 1775, has not been made very clear to us in our school histories, and some of us have grown up with the impression that the sentiment for separation was practically unanimous, and that any who opposed it were rather reprehensible characters.

As the rebellion grew to the strength of a revolution, those Loyalists who still remained unconverted suffered much for their opinions; many of them lost all or much of their property, and many were

compelled to flee for their lives to Canada or elsewhere.

As is usually the case in such circumstances, the property-owning class were inclined to favor the *status quo*, at least till something better was assured, while those who had everything to gain and nothing to lose by independence were the more active and ardent 'Patriots.' Of course there were, as always, notable exceptions to this rule, who, according to the old axiom, helped to prove it. It is quite probable that the number of Loyalists or Tories, as compared with the Patriots or Rebels, was greater in proportion to the total population here than elsewhere, and when we consider how much Nantucket had at stake in the issue, this is perhaps not to be wondered at. In the event of war, whatever the result, she stood to lose all, while peace meant safety and continued prosperity. It was a pretty severe test, and one to which few communities were put, at least to quite the same degree.

When, in addition to these considerations, we remember that a very large proportion of the people were Quakers, and

that peace was one of the strongest tenets of their religion, we can readily see that the avoidance of a conflict was of paramount importance to them. All they asked was to be let alone, but alas! this was just what neither side would agree to.

The peculiarly exposed position of the island laid it open to attack by any armed vessel; its wealth and importance made it a prize worth striving for; the people, being unarmed, had no means of defending themselves, and the Continental Congress was not in a position to afford them any protection. Their industries being almost exclusively maritime, they were dependent upon the outside world for the bulk of their food supplies. The vessels they sent to the mainland for provisions were, whenever possible, intercepted by the British, the cargoes confiscated, and the crews imprisoned on the ground that, whatever their sympathies, they could not be allowed to trade with rebels. If they sought cargoes from the West Indies or elsewhere abroad, they were accused of smuggling by the Colonial authorities, to whose laws they were, nominally at least, subject.

Thus they were between the devil and the deep sea. Flour rose to thirty dollars a barrel, corn to three dollars a bushel, with other provisions in proportion; fuel became so scarce that the price was practically prohibitive; hardware, textiles and manufactured goods in general were almost impossible to obtain at any price. Yet, in spite of all, they kept some ships at sea throughout the war — a few still taking the desperate chances at whaling, while some of the smaller vessels engaged in the West India trade, which proved very profitable if they succeeded in evading the swarms of British privateers and letters of marque which soon infested the coast. Fishing on the near-by shoals was prosecuted to some extent, but the scarcity of salt for curing the catch, despite the fact that some was manufactured on the island, prevented those who engaged in it from deriving the advantage from this industry which might otherwise have accrued to them.

Gradually the savings of years of prosperity were exhausted, and many who were well off when the war began were reduced almost to penury, while the less fortunate were practically destitute.

At first the troubles of the Nantucketers were principally with the Colonial authorities, the impression being apparently that the islanders were favorable to the cause of the Tories and would bear watching. As early as May 23, 1775, scarcely a month after the battle of Lexington, a vessel arrived with a hundred or more Provincial troops, who landed and marched up from the wharf with drums beating and colors flying, claiming they had come to seize a quantity of flour which they alleged had been landed at Nantucket, but which was intended for the eventual use of the British. This force remained for four days, taking no flour, but carrying off some fifty whale-boats with them when they left.

Other expeditions came during the summer to investigate reports of alleged shipments of oil to England, either already made or contemplated. In October Richard Mitchell and Stephen Hussey went to Boston to try and get authority to have provisions and supplies brought to the island. In December Dr. Samuel Gelston was arrested and taken away by a squad of colonial troops on suspicion of

Tory sympathies and of giving aid and counsel to the enemy.

In March, 1776, the Congress passed an order that no Nantucket vessel should be supplied with provisions without a permit in writing signed by three justices of the peace at Barnstable.

As soon as the British were in possession of the ports which they succeeded in taking early in the war, they began fitting out privateers and letters of marque to prey on the commerce of the colonies. These soon took a hand in the persecution of the Nantucketers, who were subjected to a series of annoying and inquisitorial acts — ostensibly to ascertain if they were aiding the rebels, but probably in reality with the hope of securing more or less booty.

Nantucket lying conveniently in the path of the armed ships of both belligerents, and being practically defenceless, each side, when it had nothing better to do, seemed determined on trying to prove that she was helping the other. Though she could get no supplies for herself, badly as she needed them, she was accused by each of furnishing them to the enemy.

So the weary years dragged on. No actual depredations of serious consequence were committed until the year 1779, when, on the 6th of April, a fleet of eight armed British vessels arrived at the Bar, two of which entered the harbor and came up to the wharf. A force of about a hundred men was landed, and several stores and warehouses plundered of goods to the value of over fifty thousand dollars, one Thomas Jenkins being the chief sufferer. Many of the bolder spirits among the townspeople were for resenting this outrage by a show of force, but the Quaker principles of non-resistance, even under these exasperating circumstances, ruled the more influential, and their counsels finally prevailed; so the freebooters departed unmolested.

However much we may wish that on that occasion our ancestors had put up just one good fight and driven the invaders from their soil, a moment's consideration of the probable reprisals which would certainly have been visited upon them had they done so will convince us that any resistance would have been not only useless, but foolhardy in the extreme. The town

would have been at once bombarded and probably destroyed, and under cover of the cannonading from the ships a force of several hundred men could easily have been landed, against which the unarmed townspeople would have been powerless.

It is only fair to the Nantucketers to say at this time that many of them showed they were not lacking in courage by fighting throughout the war for the cause of independence — even though their services were not rendered at home. Especially in the young American navy there is evidence that Nantucket sailors served long and well. As an instance of this, out of a crew of a hundred and thirty-one men on the famous American privateer Ranger, commanded by John Paul Jones, no less then twenty-one hailed from Nantucket. Of that crew Jones said: 'It was the best crew I have ever seen and, I believe, the best afloat.'

Two months after the raid above referred to a committee, comprising Benjamin Tupper, Timothy Folger, Samuel Starbuck and William Rotch, was appointed by the town to go to New York and Newport and present the case of the

islanders to the British commanders at those ports. This committee returned with the assurance of Commodore Sir George Collier, in command at New York, seconded by General Sir Henry Clinton, of a favorable disposition toward the town, and that everything possible would be done to prevent a recurrence of these acts of hostility. The Commodore's orders expressly forbade all vessels or bodies of armed men to molest, ravage or plunder the estates, houses or persons of the inhabitants of the island. Notwithstanding these assurances, however, early in the September following a squadron of armed vessels appeared at the Vineyard with the announced intention of sacking and plundering the town of Nantucket, awaiting only a favorable wind to cross the sound and begin the attack. A communication from the commanders of the expedition was sent to the island, accusing the people, on the evidence of one John Boswell, of acts hostile to His Majesty's interests and favorable to those of the enemy. To this the town, by Frederick Folger, Town Clerk, replied at some length, denying the charges in toto and

making counter accusations that British vessels which had visited the port had violated the assurances given to the townspeople by Commodore Collier. The wind still holding unfavorable, before this answer could be delivered the fleet sailed for New York, and it afterward appeared that the expedition was not authorized by the British commander-in-chief, but was promoted by over-zealous Loyalists who were, apparently, in very truth 'more loyalist than the king himself.'

The year 1780 was perhaps the worst of the war — the winter of greatest discontent for the islanders. By the 20th of December, 1779, the harbor was closed by ice, and it remained frozen throughout the winter. This protected the town from attack, but it also prevented the arrival of even the few supplies which might otherwise have reached the people, and the suffering was prolonged and intense. Deep snow made it difficult to secure what little fuel was available in the form of peat and brushwood from the swamps. Obed Macy states that the entire harbor was frozen so firmly that for some time horses and calashes were regularly employed in

carting scrub oak and cedar across the ice from Coskata to town, a distance of some eight miles or more.

All through the year 1781 the people were subjected to many wanton annoyances and humiliations by the British privateers, and various minor depredations were committed, until finally, on October 23d, another deputation was sent to New York with a memorial to Admiral Digby, then in command of the English fleet there, asking for protection from these raids. The Admiral 'gave his positive order to prevent further molestation of persons or property within the bar of the harbor.' The committee, which included Samuel Starbuck, William Rotch and Benjamin Hussey, then renewed the petition to be allowed to engage in whaling. As a result of their representations a considerable number of individual permits were granted to Nantucket ships, but the islanders were by that time so reduced and impoverished in both men and money that they were unable to make the most of the opportunity thus offered. A few short voyages were undertaken, with some success, but several of the ships carrying

these permits were captured by American privateers and taken into port, where, strange to say, the Colonial authorities usually recognized the British permits — at least to the extent of releasing the ships as soon as the facts were made known.

By 1782 peace was in the air, and conditions gradually improved, though the final treaty, recognizing the independence of the colonies, was not ratified until early in 1784, and by that time Nantucket had well-nigh reached the end of her resources. About eighty-five per cent of all her shipping, in actual tonnage, had been lost, captured or destroyed, and even the most optimistic spirits could hardly hope that the place would ever recover its former importance and prosperity.

Even before the war began there had been one or two emigrations of a considerable number of Nantucket families to other points, with the hope of bettering their condition. One of the earliest dates from about 1761, when quite a large colony of Nantucketers and Cape Codders removed to Nova Scotia, settling at Barrington, near Cape Sable, where many of their descendants survive to this day.

Naturally these movements were accelerated and new ones inaugurated as a result of the war. Just before and during the Revolution a large number moved to the vicinity of Saratoga, and in 1783 many families migrated to a point on the Hudson River then known as Claverack Landing, the name being changed a year later to Hudson. It is perhaps not surprising that this place later attained considerable prominence as a whaling port.

Other early migrations were to Poughkeepsie and Nine Partners, New York, New Garden, North Carolina, and Vassalboro and Kennebec, Maine, and at all of these places it is said descendants of Nantucketers may still be found.

After the war conditions were so unfavorable for a time that some of the more active shipowners and merchants sought opportunity to engage in business in Europe.

William Rotch, who was one of the leading spirits, commercially, transferred his affairs for a time to Dunkirk, France, where he sent out a number of whale-ships between 1786 and 1794, employing many Nantucket captains and seamen. He also

carried on the business for a time at Milford Haven, England, but after conditions improved he returned to Nantucket. The large brick building at the foot of Main Street, at the corner of Straight Wharf, in which the Pacific Club (long known as 'The Cap'ns' Room') is located, was built in 1772 by William Rotch, as an office and warehouse, and it is sometimes spoken of as 'Rotch's market.'

The story of the British and French whaling industry, as carried on by Nantucketers, is worthy of a chapter all to itself, but the reader is referred to the larger histories for the more complete narrative of these events.

CHAPTER VIII

RECOVERY AND MORE REVERSES

ALTHOUGH peace was hailed nowhere with greater joy and thanksgiving than at Nantucket, business did not at once recover, and the depression lasted for some years. Great losses were sustained through the depreciation of the large amount of paper currency which had been the principal circulating medium during the war, and which had become practically valueless. The loss of so many ships, the depletion of capital in the various industries, and, still more, the lack of active and able-bodied men, due to the death of so many of the seamen as well as to emigration — which still continued to some extent — all added to the difficulty of re-establishing the business which had formerly proved so profitable, and the first cautious ventures were made with many misgivings. But at first oil commanded a good price, whales were plentiful and comparatively tame by reason of long immunity from pursuit, and a few good voyages were made, which en-

couraged the more fortunate and enterprising to continue.

As early as February, 1783, a cargo of oil was shipped from the island to London in the ship Bedford, Captain William Mooers, and this vessel had the honor of first displaying the Stars and Stripes in a British port. The oil brought a good price, but to encourage 'home' industry, carried on to a large extent by expatriated Nantucketers, England soon put a high duty on oil from abroad and offered bounties to her whalemen, practically closing her market. The colonies, impoverished by the war, were unable to take even the limited amount of oil which Nantucket was soon producing. A market was sought in France, and with some success for a time, but the domestic difficulties then gathering in that unhappy country soon put an end to the whalemen's hopes there.

In 1785 the General Court of Massachusetts came to the rescue with an act granting a bounty of five pounds per ton for white, and sixty shillings per ton for brown or yellow spermaceti, and forty shillings per ton for whale oil, taken by

ships owned and manned wholly by citizens of the Commonwealth. The principal effect of this well-intentioned measure was so to stimulate whaling at other ports that there was soon an over-production; the price of oil dropped still lower, and the bounty was soon withdrawn, Nantucket having gained little beside increased competition.

Many of the older men went into cod-fishing, a few 'bankers' were fitted out and met with some success, and there was even talk of substituting this industry for whaling — at least until conditions improved. But the Nantucketers did not take kindly to the idea; they were whalers first, last and all the time, and were quite willing to leave the cod to the 'Capies' and Marbleheaders. So they persevered in spite of adverse conditions, and at last the tide began to turn slowly in their favor.

Taking all these difficulties into consideration, and the fact that they had to make practically a new start after the war, it is a truly remarkable thing to be able to record that in less than ten years after peace was restored, Nantucket was

again on the high road to prosperity. The number of ships at sea, though only a fraction of the fleet before the war, was constantly increasing, larger ships were being employed, and the voyages were lengthening as new 'grounds' were discovered and worked. The manufacture of sperm candles, which had been tried on a small scale before the war, was now rapidly developed, and soon became an important industry.

In 1791 the ship Beaver, Captain Paul Worth, doubled Cape Horn, and other Nantucket whalers soon followed. A few English whalers at about the same time ventured into the Pacific, but it remained for the Nantucketers to realize fully the possibilities of this marvellously rich field for their enterprise, and in the half century or more following these first ventures 'round the Horn,' the great Pacific was home for most of the active years of life to thousands of Nantucket men, the few weeks or months spent ashore being merely holiday incidents. They explored it from Antarctic to Arctic circle and beyond, from the western coast of North and South America to Japan, China and Aus-

tralia, and thence through the Indian Ocean to the east coast of Africa, often returning by way of the Cape of Good Hope. Much of their cruising ground was then uncharted, and it is said that no less than thirty islands in the Pacific Ocean were discovered and named by the Nantucket whalemen. The 'Off-Shore Grounds,' 'On Japan,' and other famous whaling localities were familiar names to all Nantucketers in the old days, and millions of good dollars were taken in this mightiest of oceans and brought to our little island to add to the comfort and luxury of its people.

There is perhaps nothing quite like it in all history — that a little community of a few thousand souls, located on a barren isle far from the centres of trade and commerce, should have sent their tiny wooden ships literally to the uttermost ends of the earth, to return laden with wealth, seized from the very ocean itself! Even the stories of Carthage, Rome and Venice are not more wonderful to recall; for those were all great cities, nations in fact, while Nantucket, even at the height of her prosperity, was by comparison scarcely more

than a hamlet. Moreover, much of the wealth of those famous cities of old was obtained, if not by actual plunder, at least by methods of which the less said the better, while the riches acquired by our ancestors were the result of honest toil and hardship — by which no man suffered wrong and many profited much.

It may be interesting to quote from Obed Macy's history some particulars of that first Pacific Ocean voyage, which the historian received from Captain Worth himself. The Beaver was of two hundred and forty tons burthen, and cost, completely equipped for the voyage, $10,212. She carried a crew of seventeen men and manned three boats of five men each. Casks in 'shooks,' to a capacity of eighteen hundred barrels, formed the bulk of her outward cargo. For provisions she took forty barrels of salted meats, three and a half tons of ship bread, thirty bushels of beans and peas, one thousand pounds of rice, forty gallons of molasses, and twenty-four barrels of flour. These supplies, with the addition of only two hundred pounds of bread, bought in a foreign port, sufficed for a voyage of

seventeen months. She brought home six hundred and fifty barrels of sperm oil, worth thirty pounds a ton, three hundred and seventy barrels of head matter, worth sixty pounds a ton, and two hundred and fifty barrels of whale oil, worth fifteen pounds per ton.

By the very simple process of reducing pounds sterling to dollars and barrels to tons, and a few moments' calculation, the exact value of her return cargo may readily be ascertained by the mathematically inclined reader.

In 1795 Governor Lovelace's euphonious but meaningless name of Sherburne was dropped forever, and the name Nantucket, by which both the island and the county were known, was given to the town as well. In the same year the first bank was established, and a few months later it was robbed of some twenty thousand dollars, the incident creating great excitement at the time.

The year 1798 brought troubles and discouragement by reason of the difficulties then existing between England and France. There was little law on the high seas at the best in those times, and privateers of all

NANTUCKET TOWN AND HARBOR
From an eighteenth-century print

the leading maritime nations of Europe had long been carrying on a species of semi-official piracy, under one pretext or another, any defenceless ship being a likely victim. During this latest disturbance four Nantucket ships, with their cargoes, were seized — entailing a money loss of something like $150,000. These depredations were committed from time to time for some years, and no ship was safe unless well-armed or faster than her would-be captors. Yet despite these dangers, and notwithstanding all the losses of the Revolution and the large emigrations from the island, we find that at the beginning of the nineteenth century Nantucket's population had increased to over fifty-six hundred, and it was still growing rapidly. Even the increasing and studied hostility of England and her many annoyances to American shipping failed to check the progress which the island was making, and the first decade of the century shows a steady and consistent growth in population, wealth and commerce.

The Pacific Bank was founded in 1804, two insurance companies were established the same year, many new and substantial

buildings were being erected, and by 1810 the population had reached nearly seven thousand. If this does not sound very large in these modern times, it would be well to compare the figures with the population of many of the leading cities and towns of New England at that period, and it will be seen that Nantucket must have been a place of considerable importance by comparison even with the leaders. At one time, it is said, the town ranked third in wealth and commerce among the towns of Massachusetts, being exceeded only by Boston and Salem.

The first ship built on Nantucket was launched at Brant Point in 1810, and was christened 'Rose.' In 1811 seventeen ships and seven schooners sailed from the port, and in the next year the total island fleet numbered one hundred and sixteen, including forty-three ships, seven brigs, nineteen schooners, and four sloops. More than three quarters of these vessels were at sea when the second war with England broke out, and the sensations of the islanders at this time, with the memory of the Revolution still fresh in the minds of all who had reached or passed middle

age, may be better imagined than described.

On May 5, 1812, a little over a month before the actual declaration of war, when it had become evident that hostilities were impending, the inhabitants of Nantucket, in town meeting assembled, memorialized the Congress of the United States, setting forth their defenceless situation and condition, and praying that the war might be averted. But even if such an appeal could have had any effect, matters had then gone too far, and war was declared on June 18th.

As before, during the Revolution, the Quakers were determined to take no active part in the controversy, and as they had increased in strength and influence to the point of practically controlling the politics of the town, they tried to keep on good terms with both sides — with the natural result that they were trusted by neither, and were suspected by each of being favorable to the other.

Before the British minister left Washington they planned to appeal to him to use his influence with his government to secure immunity from attack for themselves and their ships, and the petition

was actually drawn; but it was never sent and the idea was finally abandoned.

In July a Nantucket whaler, the Mount Hope, was captured and burned by a British cruiser near the Gulf Stream, and her crew were made prisoners of war. This was the first of many similar experiences, and from that time on most of the terrible incidents of the former war were re-enacted, with many new and distressing experiences added for good measure.

Gradually but surely the accumulated fortunes of years of toil and sacrifice were again swept away, business was practically at a standstill, and suffering and privation again ruled where such a brief time before had been happiness and abundance.

Verily our little island community has paid the price of war, while reaping none of the alleged advantages of victory!

Stocks of provisions soon ran low, and the price of grain rose to a prohibitive figure. Fuel was scarce, and none could be hoped for from abroad, for the few small vessels which took the desperate chance of escaping the enemy's cruisers and privateers needed all their cargo room for such food supplies as they could secure.

In November the people appealed directly to President Madison for relief to avert famine, and, keeping always in mind their main business, begged leave to ask 'if any stipulation can consistently be effected with Great Britain whereby the cod and whale fisheries of both nations may be exempted from the ravages of war.' But not even this concession to the cod availed to help the situation.

Matters went from bad to worse during 1813, and finally, to cap the climax, notice was received of a direct tax of five thousand dollars to be levied on the town for war purposes by the Federal authorities. Another memorial was despatched to Congress, the memorialists shrewdly observing that the tax 'appears to have been contemplated for the defence of the country,' but that 'their detached situation from the continent . . . their exposed and defenceless condition, which renders it impossible for adequate defence to be afforded, are circumstances which they believe are but partially known to Congress.'

A promise was at last given by the authorities to mitigate, as far as might be possible, the restrictions of the embargo

on commerce then in force, so as to permit the shipment of provisions and other necessaries to the island. But with swift armed vessels of the enemy constantly patrolling the Sound, even the most favorable disposition to help the situation was of little avail without the means to accomplish the end desired.

Getting no aid from their own country, the people finally turned to the enemy for relief, and in July, 1814, the Selectmen qualified Silvanus Macy and Isaac Coffin as commissioners, and sent them in the sloop Hawk, David Starbuck, Master, under a flag of truce 'to Chesapeake Bay or elsewhere, there to treat with the British naval commander-in-chief on the North American station.'

The Hawk sought Admiral Cochrane, then in command, first at Bermuda, but just missed him; so they sailed again for the Chesapeake. The Admiral, however, having heard of the situation at the island, had left instructions with Commodore Hotham, in command at New London, and soon after the commissioners left the island assurances had been received from the Commodore that a limited number of

passports would be issued for vessels to go to the mainland for supplies, upon a stipulation of strict neutrality on the part of the people of Nantucket, and that 'if it be found that they pay any direct taxes or internal duties for the support of the Government of the United States, I will withdraw this indulgence forthwith, and will call upon them to pay double the amount to His Majesty's Government.'

This was a delicate situation for the good Quakers who controlled the affairs of the town, and they were in a quandary. What could they do? Was there a way out? They thought so, and here is what they did. They memorialized Congress once more, stating the terms on which the enemy would allow them to save themselves from starvation, and asked that the collection of all Federal taxes due from them be suspended. Then they advised Commodore Hotham of their action, and added this most significant paragraph:

> But to remove all doubt of the intention of the inhabitants fully to comply, as far as practicable, with the requisitions of the Honorable Sir Alexander Cochrane, the officer deputed to collect the taxes upon the island was

prevailed upon immediately to resign his commission. We feel confident that no inhabitant of the island will accept the appointment as collector, and that no stranger will expose himself so much as he necessarily must to hold this undesirable office. Under these circumstances we are persuaded no taxes will be paid.

In the language of the world's people of our own day and time, 'Can you beat it?'

But Hotham was not to be bluffed, and immediately came back at them with a demand for a direct answer as to 'whether the town is determined to refuse the payment of the direct taxes and internal duties which are or shall be required by the Government of the United States?'

Another town meeting was called. Obed Macy, himself a Quaker, ingenuously states, doubtless from memory, that 'many of the inhabitants, believing that the business was about to be conducted in a way to bring the censure of their government, if nothing more, upon them, concluded that it would be safer for them not to attend the meeting.'

However, the meeting was held, and it was voted not to pay any tax to the

United States Government while the war lasted; to appoint a committee to enforce the neutrality agreed upon; and to prevent the carrying off of any provisions from the island except by Admiral Hotham's permission. The irony of this last vote must have been keenly relished by the hungry voters.

What might have developed from this decidedly risky situation if the war had lasted much longer, is an interesting conjecture. This meeting was held on September 28, 1814. In October negotiations for peace were begun, and all else was doubtless forgotten.

The only actual battle fought on or near Nantucket in either war occurred on the evening of October 10, 1814, when the American privateer Prince of Neuchatel, convoying the British merchantman Douglas as a prize, was attacked near the south shore of the island by five armed boats from the British frigate Endymion. The battle was brief, but sanguinary, the frigate's boats being repulsed with the loss of about a hundred and twenty men killed and taken prisoners, three of the boats having been sunk. Nantucket's only con-

nection with the affair was the fact that the pilot, whose name was Kilburn, was a Nantucketer, and he was one of five men who were killed on the privateer.

Peace was proclaimed in February, 1815, and Nantucket found herself again prostrated by war, with only twenty-three ships of her fleet left; and once again she took up the task of rehabilitation.

CHAPTER IX

THE PALMY DAYS

NANTUCKET recovered much more rapidly from the effects of 'the war of '12,' as it came to be called, than from the Revolution. The demand for oil had increased greatly during the generation which had elapsed, and the market was much more widely extended. No serious competitor in the whaling business had yet arisen abroad, despite all the efforts of some of the European nations to foster and encourage the industry. Though New Bedford was growing rapidly in importance as a whaling port, and her output eventually exceeded Nantucket's, so long as the ships employed were not of too deep a draught to permit their passage over the bar which extends across the harbor entrance, the island managed to hold its own.

During the year 1815 twenty-six ships and twenty-four other vessels of all kinds cleared from the port, and many of these were whalers bound for the Pacific. In 1818 Captain George W. Gardner, in the

ship Globe, discovered the 'Off-Shore Grounds,' so called, extending, roughly, from about five to ten degrees south, and from about one hundred and five to one hundred and twenty-five degrees west, off the coast of Chile and Peru. The Globe took over two thousand barrels of sperm oil in this vicinity in a few months, and the following year there were some fifty or more whalers there. In the next year, 1819, ship Maro, Captain Joseph Allen, cruised to the eastward of Japan, and discovered the famous 'Japan Grounds.' These proved the richest fields yet opened up, and some wonderful voyages were made during the next decade after their discovery. The whalemen always referred to these grounds as 'On Japan.'

The first regular schedule of steam communication established in New England went into operation in 1818, when the little steamer Eagle, of about eighty tons, began making regular trips between Nantucket and New Bedford.

By the year 1820 seventy-two whalers were owned at the island, and the population had increased to nearly seventy-three hundred. The Nantucket Mechanic's As-

sociation was organized that year — to be followed three years later by the Columbian Literary Association. The two were merged in 1827 under the name of the United Library Association, and in 1834 this was incorporated under the name of the Nantucket Atheneum Library and Museum, an institution of which every true Nantucketer, from that day to this, has been justly proud.

In 1827 two public schools were opened, providing free education up to the grammar grades, and the Coffin school, established and endowed by Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin, Bart., of the British Navy, was opened the same year, primarily for the benefit of descendants of Tristram Coffin, but as it was soon found that this would include nearly if not quite all the descendants of any of the old families, the line was not drawn very strictly, and any pupil able to pay the small tuition required was admitted — up to the capacity of the institution.

Ship Lopez, Captain Obed Starbuck, made a remarkable voyage in 1829–30, taking 2280 barrels of sperm oil, worth $50,000, in fourteen months, and in 1830

ship Sarah, Captain Frederick Arthur, arrived, after a voyage lacking one month of three years, with the largest amount of sperm ever brought in before or since, 3497 barrels, valued at $98,000. During the five years immediately before and succeeding 1830 Nantucket produced from forty to fifty thousand barrels of sperm oil annually. In 1832 forty whalers, the largest number in any one year in its history, sailed from Nantucket.

About this time the first great split in the ranks of the Quakers occurred, the 'Hicksites,' who were followers of Elias Hicks, and stood for a more liberal faith and greater liberty of individual belief, seceding from the main body. The movement soon spread to Nantucket, and the Hicksites erected a large new meeting house of their own on Main Street, on the lot now occupied by the residence of Mrs. William T. Swain, next east of the Charles G. Coffin homestead, where they held their meetings until early in the 1850's. This building, later known as 'Atlantic Hall,' is still in existence, after a checkered career, as related elsewhere.

Other divisions occurred later, and the

'Wilburites' and 'Gurneyites,' followers respectively of John Wilbur and John Joseph Gurney, were engaged in a long litigation over the ownership of the meeting house on Fair Street, which had been built by the original or so-called 'Orthodox' Quakers in 1833–34. This meeting house, which was a large building, 50 × 70 feet, stood on the corner of Fair Street and Moore's Lane south of the smaller building now owned by the Nantucket Historical Association, which was built by the orthodox body as a schoolhouse in 1838.

After the litigation over the ownership of the Fair Street property, both factions joined in 1864 in a deed to Alfred Macy, attorney, and the proceeds from the sale, with the cash in the treasury, were divided by agreement between the two meetings. Later the Wilburites, who, in the matter of opinion, were the logical successor of the original orthodox body, reverting to the more rigid and less liberal standpoint, repurchased the schoolhouse and worshipped there for many years, as long as any worshippers of this branch survived. In 1894 the building was sold to the Historical Association. Since then

occasional meetings, addressed by visiting Friends from the mainland, have been held in this building from time to time during the summer seasons.

The Gurneyites built a meeting house in 1850 on the east side of Centre Street, between Pearl and Chestnut Streets, where they met for a generation or more. This building is still standing, being now the dining-room of the Roberts House.

This whole story of the various Quaker meetings and meeting houses is a most intricate and complicated one, but it is of great interest to the student, and especially so to those whose ancestors were of that persuasion. Further space cannot be devoted to it here, but those who wish to pursue the inquiry further are referred to Vol. 1, No. 1, of the Bulletins of the Nantucket Historical Association, 'Quakerism on Nantucket since 1800,' by Henry B. Worth, and to Starbuck's 'History of Nantucket.'

Just how far these several schisms in the original body of the faith contributed to the gradual decline and disintegration of the Society of Friends it would be difficult to estimate, but dating from about

the time of the first great split, the membership dwindled gradually but steadily, and, so far as Nantucket is concerned, Quakerism did not survive the nineteenth century.

The population in 1830 was seven thousand, two hundred and two.

In 1835 Daniel Webster visited the island to try an important case, and he was so impressed with the size and importance of the town that he called it 'the unknown city in the ocean.' It is related that the shrewd Quaker litigant who employed 'the Great Expounder' made a deal with him in advance to pay him five hundred dollars, stipulating that he was to have all Mr. Webster's time and energy during the term of court, and that he then farmed out the services of the eminent counsel to other litigants, clearing a handsome profit on the transaction. 'Friend Daniel' is said to have keenly appreciated the joke on himself.

The country-wide financial panic of 1836–37 hit Nantucket rather hard, the banks entirely suspending specie payments for some time, but business soon recovered and a new era of prosperity

began. In 1838 occurred the first great fire which had visited Nantucket, entailing a loss of nearly $300,000 to buildings and contents along the water front south of Main Street. Ship Joseph Starbuck, the largest and finest ship ever built at Nantucket, was launched at Brant Point in that year. This ship made only one voyage, being wrecked on the bar outward bound on her second voyage in 1842.

The first public high school was established in 1838, with Cyrus Pierce as principal.

The census of 1840 showed a population of nine thousand, seven hundred and twelve, and as the climax of the whaling business was not reached till a few years later, it is probable that some time about 1842 or 1843 the ten-thousand mark was reached and passed, though there is no official record to that effect. In 1841 twenty-nine ships fitted for sea, and the record for the next five years is as follows: 1842, fourteen; 1843, sixteen; 1844, fifteen; 1845, twenty-nine; 1846, fourteen. In 1842, which is usually considered the high-water mark in the history of the port, about ninety ships of all kinds, with an

aggregate of over thirty-six thousand tons, hailed from this little port.

Those were the palmy days of Nantucket. With a whale-ship arriving or one departing nearly every week in the year, and in some weeks two or three, with a score or more ships always at the wharves, either fitting for a voyage or discharging cargo, every one was busy from sun to sun. The water front was a scene of constant activity, being lined with warehouses, oil refineries, candle and candle-box factories, coopers', carpenters', blacksmiths' and boat builders' shops, rope walks, sail lofts, outfitting, hardware and grocery stores, ship chandlers and various other stores and shops of every description, all busy and prosperous. It is hard to realize it now, as we walk along those quiet lanes and note only fishing boats or pleasure craft, with an occasional coasting schooner, alongside the wharves or moored in the docks.

Packets to and from Boston, New York, New Bedford and other ports, were constantly arriving and departing, bringing supplies for the ships and the townspeople, and carrying to the mainland the vari-

ous finished products of the whale. Great drays, loaded with casks and merchandise, rumbled all day over the cobbles, and the wharves were piled high with goods in hogsheads, bales and cases. Everything smelled of tar and oil, and the air resounded with the varied noises of a great industry, the sounds of the carpenters' and coopers' hammers or the caulkers' mallets, the shouts of the workers and the chanties of the sailor-men. Staid old Quaker merchants and ship owners, in broadcloth and broad-brims, sat in their counting houses and gave orders, or paced sedately up and down the streets and wharves in and out through the busy traffic. Though on a limited scale, the old town had all the characteristics of a great commercial metropolis, and was proportionately quite as prosperous and bustling as even London or New York.

Voyages now lasted all the way from two to four years, according to luck, for few ships turned their prows toward home unless their holds were well filled, and if it took four years, or even longer, to do it, they stayed that length of time. Many months and sometimes years passed with-

out word from home, for the maritime mail delivery on the Pacific was very much a matter of chance. Every outward-bound whaler carried letters for men on other ships in the fleet, and those homeward bound carried return mail for the island, but it was a large area to cover, and weeks and months often passed without a sail being raised on the horizon. When two whalers 'spoke' each other on the high seas, it was the custom, if no whales were in sight, to heave to and have a 'gam' — that is, a visit and a talk. The captains exchanged calls, and those sailors who were lucky enough to be in the captain's boat had a chance to vary the monotony of life by seeing some new faces and swapping jack-knives and tobacco. Sometimes, when two ships were 'in company' for several days, as often happened, all hands on both ships had a chance to meet and gam for a while.

Libraries were usually exchanged in toto on such occasions, for the few books carried on a whaler had usually been read and re-read many times by all on board who had any taste for reading. Whalemen were rich in leisure, for the crews were

much larger than on a merchantman, six men being required to man each boat, besides enough to work the ship when the boats were down after whales, and as the smaller ships carried three boats and the larger ones four, at least, the crews averaged from twenty-five to thirty-five men. If a ship was short-handed from death, accident or desertions, men were shipped wherever they could be found. Many natives of the South Sea islands shipped on the whalers, all going under the generic name of 'Kanakas,' regardless of the group from which they hailed. Most outward-bound whalers ran east to the Azores before heading south to clear the Horn. Often a whale might be taken in that vicinity to 'grease the ship,' and then there was always a chance of shipping a man or two at Fayal, and getting some fresh vegetables cheap. These Portuguese from the 'Western Islands,' as the Azores were called, made excellent whalemen, and a great many of them, after a few voyages, settled at Nantucket, married and raised families. They were almost invariably sober, thrifty, frugal and industrious, and proved themselves good citizens.

In the forties and fifties Nantucket received her full share of the large Irish immigration of that period, and some of that race took to the sea and became smart whalemen. Most of the Irish immigrants of that day were of the better class of agricultural laborers, and they developed remarkably under the favorable conditions found there. Many of their descendants in the second and third generation are among the leading citizens of the island in these times. A few other immigrants came also.

These various accessions of new and different stocks were undoubtedly a good thing for the island, for, as might be expected in view of its isolated position and lack of direct contact with other towns, the descendants of the early settlers had intermarried until, as they used to say, 'most every one is related to most every one else here'; and it is a well-known fact that such a condition of affairs holds grave dangers if carried too far.

Very early in her time of prosperity Nantucket began to develop a rather high type of civilization and culture. The sea produced much wealth, and prosperity beyond the ordinary was quite general.

There were not many millionaires, though the whaling business did make a few such, but many individual fortunes running into hundreds of thousands were acquired, and that was great wealth for the time. It was no unusual thing for a captain to retire with a competency after a few successful voyages while still well under middle age; and the ship-owners who had several ships out at once often cleared enough to retire on in a very few years when matters went well with their ventures.

Some costly and beautiful homes of dignity and good taste were built by many of the more fortunate and successful of these merchants and captains, and a fine sense of public spirit and civic interest was shown by many of them in the intervals of their money grubbing, to the great profit and advantage of the town in many ways.

Their children were usually given every advantage which money could buy, and great store was set by education and the encouragement of literature and the arts. The lyceum flourished here in the mid-century period as in few towns of its size,

and the people heard the best of the lecturers, public speakers, and readers of the day. In fact, all those finer and higher ideals which make for the amenities of life were cultivated by these people in the midst of their active business life and interests.

The result was that by the latter half of the nineteenth century this little town had evolved a type of society rarely to be found outside of a large city, and one that would compare favorably with that in many much larger centers. Cultivated visitors to the island at that period were invariably impressed with and frequently remarked upon this quite unexpected general culture and refinement of the people in their social relations.

It is not the purpose of this writer to enumerate or even to mention by name any of the very large number of men and women of Nantucket birth or parentage who have achieved eminence and distinction in many of the walks of life in the larger world outside. The list is so large that the limitations of a work of this character preclude an extended treatment of the subject, and justice cannot be done to

it in a too hasty summary. Moreover, it has been quite exhaustively considered in some of the works referred to in the preface to this volume, to which the reader is referred. Suffice it to say, however, that it is doubtful if any other place of its size in our country can boast of a greater number of sons and daughters who have, in one way or another, made their mark in the world.

So, of many of the thrilling incidents in the annals of the whaling, such as the loss of the ship Essex, which was stove and sunk by an angry whale, the story of the mutiny on the ship Globe, and the sufferings of the survivors, which has been published in a book by itself, the loss of the Oeno and the deaths of all her crew save one, at the hands of the cannibals in the Fiji islands — these and many more can only be hinted at here as suggesting the romance and peril of the life, requiring the pen of a Kipling or a Stevenson to do them anything approaching justice.

Through the enterprise of Peter C. Ewer, the 'camels' were introduced in Nantucket in the year 1842. These were a sort of floating dry-dock, by means of

'THE CAMELS,' USED AT NANTUCKET TO TAKE WHALE-SHIPS OVER THE BAR, 1842–49

which vessels drawing too much water to cross the bar were lifted bodily and floated over the shoal places. They were built of wood in a shape to fit the hull of a ship, like a cradle, and were in two parts, held together by heavy chains, with water-tight compartments in the hull of each part. When the compartments were allowed to fill, the camels settled low enough in the water for the ship to be floated in, resting on the chains under her keel. The chains were then 'hove taut' and secured, the water pumped out by powerful steam pumps, and the camels, bearing the ship, rose till the whole outfit drew only a few feet of water, and could easily be towed over the bar. The ship Constitution was the first to be 'cameled,' outward-bound, in 1842. Ship Peru was brought in later in the same year, and several others were afterward handled successfully, but for some reason which has never been quite satisfactorily explained, their use was abandoned after a few years. An excellent model of the camels may be seen at the rooms of the Historical Association.

For some time prior to this, it had been the custom for many of the deeper draught

ships to load and discharge at Edgartown, on Martha's Vineyard, passing the bar 'light.' With the example constantly before her, and in view of the large profits then being made in the business, it is rather difficult to understand why Edgartown, with her superior natural advantages and facilities, did not engage in whaling to a greater extent.

One of the tragedies in the history of the island occurred in 1844, when, on the night of February 21, the buildings on the poor farm, then located at Quaise, caught fire and were burned to the ground, ten of the inmates losing their lives.

The Nantucket 'Weekly Mirror' was started in 1845, surviving until 1865, when it was merged with 'The Inquirer' — which had been established in 1821 — under the title of 'The Inquirer and Mirror.' This newspaper has since flourished, and is now well started on its second century. Many other newspapers have been established at different periods in Nantucket's history, and have flourished for a longer or shorter time, as related in an interesting way in a chapter in Dr. Lithgow's book, written by Harry B. Turner,

the present editor of 'The Inquirer and Mirror.' Even fuller treatment of the subject is given by Starbuck.

'The Great Fire,' as it has ever since been called by Nantucketers, occurred on July 13, 1846. This disastrous conflagration, which started in the block at the corner of Main and Union Streets, near where the post-office is now located, destroyed almost all of the main business section of the town, as well as many residences. Over three hundred buildings in all were consumed, and the area burned over covered upward of thirty acres, extending from Main and Centre Streets north and east across Broad and Federal to a point on North Water Street, and to the harbor front. The property loss amounted to over a million dollars. Many families and small store-keepers lost practically everything they possessed, and the blow was one from which the town never fully recovered, coming, as it did, at a time when the whaling business had already begun to decline. Large contributions were received from sympathizers abroad, to relieve the suffering and destitution resulting from the catastrophe, and

in less than a year the burned area was cleared and opened and largely rebuilt — most of the buildings being much better than those which had been destroyed.

In the rebuilding the north line of lower Main Street was relocated. Before the fire this line trended more to the south of east than at present, being practically an extension of the line of Liberty Street, and the lower square was much narrower. The new street line was placed some twenty feet farther north, making the business section more rectangular in shape. Other changes in street lines were also made, and marble slabs were set at the street corners as monuments. Some of these slabs have long since disappeared, and the figures on others have been worn away by the tread of the populace during nearly seventy years. There are one or two, however, upon which the figures are still legible, and to those who realize their meaning, these marble squares near the street corners serve as a forcible reminder of the strenuous period through which Nantucket passed in 1846.

CHAPTER X

THE DECLINE

So many causes contributed, in a greater or lesser degree, to the decline of Nantucket as a whaling port, that a long chapter in this book might well be devoted to their enumeration and explanation, but the story would not be an interesting one — since failure never appeals to us like success, and only a brief space will therefore be devoted to the mention of a few of the more important reasons for the loss of the whaling business and the consequent decline in prosperity and importance which naturally followed.

First and foremost, perhaps, should be placed the scarcity of whales, or, at least, of those of the spermaceti species; for even then Nantucketers did not take kindly to right whaling, though, owing to the increasing use and advancing price of whalebone, New Bedford was making good profits from this branch of the business. Sperm whales, however, had been overhunted, and were getting more and more

scarce and difficult to obtain every year after 1840. This necessitated a constant increase in the size of the ships and the number of men in the crews, as well as in the length of the voyages, thus reducing the profits. The great fire of 1846 crippled the industry locally at a most critical time in its history. The introduction of petroleum as an illuminant greatly reduced the demand for oil and candles; it was better for the purpose and much cheaper, and soon superseded the use of sperm and whale oil entirely — thus forcing down the selling price of the latter at the very time when it was costing more to produce.

The great rush to California in 1849 took hundreds of able-bodied men from Nantucket, no less than fourteen ships sailing from the island bound for the Golden Gate in that one year alone, all officered and manned by Nantucketers and carrying many more as passengers. Others in large numbers went from other ports or started overland for the same destination. Even before the California exodus, when the whaling first began to fail, there had been some considerable emigration to the Middle West, large

groups of Nantucketers migrating in a body to points in Ohio, Indiana, and elsewhere.

The many advantages possessed by New Bedford in the matter of deeper water, proximity to markets and better transportation facilities, all militated in her favor, enabling her at last to beat Nantucket at the latter's own game, and gradually to get control of the bulk of what whaling business there was left. All these things and many more, coming practically all at once, were too much even for the indomitable pluck and spirit of Nantucket whalemen, which had been tested and proved so many times before; and though they did not give up without a hard struggle, making several attempts to revive the industry and continue the up-hill fight, the final result was inevitable. They were doomed from the start.

So by 1850 the population had already dropped over a thousand, to eight thousand, seven hundred and seventy-nine, and during the next two decades the loss in population averaged over a thousand each five years. Coincident with the decline in whaling, the Society of Friends

now dwindled very rapidly in numbers, most of the younger generation breaking away from the faith of their fathers, and though a considerable group remained faithful even unto death, the discipline and authority were greatly relaxed as time went on, in the hope of holding more of the young people. But it was too late to stem the tide, which was already running strongly worldward, and toward the last quarter of the century only a pathetic little group gathered on First and Fifth Days, where once had been hundreds and even thousands.

The many pines scattered about the island are descendants of groves planted by Josiah Sturgis in 1847. In 1851 and 1852 Charles G. and Henry Coffin planted the elms on Main Street, which to this day add much to the beauty and comfort of that thoroughfare.

Gas lighting was first introduced in 1854 and in the same year 'Our Island Home,' as it is now called, was erected, the main part of the building having been moved from Quaise to the new location at the southerly end of Orange Street. The present high school building on Academy

Hill was erected in 1856. By 1860 the population had dropped to about six thousand. Six whalers sailed that year.

Then came the Civil War. Any dereliction of which Nantucket may be accused, justly or unjustly, in the two wars with England, she more than made up in the great struggle to preserve the Union. Two hundred and thirteen men from the island served in the Northern armies, and a hundred and twenty-six entered the navy of the United States — the total in the two services aggregating fifty-six more than her quota, thus earning her the enviable record of 'the banner town of the Commonwealth.' It is known also that scores, if not hundreds, of former Nantucketers enlisted from other parts of the country during the four years of the great conflict. In both branches of the service many sons of the island distinguished themselves and won honors and promotion, and many gave their lives to the cause and were buried in the fields of the Southland, which they had helped to redeem.

The barque R. L. Barstow, the last whale-ship owned in Nantucket, sailed for the Pacific in 1868, and on November 15,

1869, the Oak, the very last to sail, left port. Neither of these ships ever returned to Nantucket.

On May 30, 1870, the barque Amy, Captain Joseph Winslow, arrived with fourteen hundred and fifty barrels of sperm, and a fortnight later, on June 14th, the brig Eunice H. Adams, Captain Zenas Coleman, came in after a voyage of fifteen months with five hundred and fifty barrels of sperm, thus ending the history of Nantucket as a whaling port for deep-sea voyages, though an occasional whale was taken in later years by boats from the shores, manned by old-time whalemen, who could not resist the temptation when challenged by Leviathan. As recently as April 20, 1886, two whales were taken off Tuckernuck, the oil and bone yielding their captors about two thousand four hundred dollars.

The census of 1870 showed a population of four thousand one hundred and twenty-three — a loss of nearly sixty per cent in thirty years, and during the next five years there was a falling off of nearly a thousand more. This was the period of lowest ebb in the affairs of Nantucket, and

the people were not to be blamed if they felt greatly depressed and discouraged in contemplating the gloomy outlook for the future.

Real estate was practically unsalable. Good houses, with fair-sized lots of land, could be bought for a few hundred dollars. The writer personally knows of several well-located estates which would bring several thousand to-day, having been sold as low as from two to three hundred dollars in the early seventies. Many houses were taken down in sections, shipped across the sound, and re-erected at points on the Cape.

Except for the fishing — which, with cod and haddock around two cents a pound or less, cured, was not very profitable — and one or two small manufacturing industries which were tried for a time without much success, there was nothing to do. Wages were very low, and active, able-bodied men of fair education were glad to be employed at a dollar a day. Many families reluctantly left the island to seek elsewhere the opportunities which were denied them here. A large number sought employment in the shoe factories

at Brockton and other towns in that vicinity. Most of the young men, on completing the school course, were forced to go to the mainland, as there was no career open to them at home which offered any promise. So, after a time, the population consisted largely of women and old men, and to the younger women the prospect of marriage was dubious at the best, though be it said to their credit and to that of their training, that many were sought in marriage by appreciative and discriminating young men who visited the island — usually to the mutual advantage of both of the contracting parties.

The old folks worked on as best they could, living over again in memory 'the good old times' of the island's prosperity and glory, but the young people who remained had not even that consolation. They had no past to recall, little to interest them in the present, and no outlook for the future.

It was a bad state of affairs all round, and if it had not happened that just about that time the American people began to acquire the vacation habit, the probabilities are that our old town would soon have been almost entirely depopulated.

CHAPTER XI

FROM MEMORY'S PAGE

As this is the story of the old rather than of the new Nantucket, it is not proposed to dwell at length on that part of her history succeeding the decline of her maritime importance. Up to this point the book is a chronicle of events which had been recorded and described by others. It remains only to relate briefly some of the more important happenings within the limits of the writer's own memory. Here he meets the competition of other memories, more retentive, perhaps, than his own, and aided, it may be, by memoranda made at the time of the occurrences, which he, having but recently acquired the recording habit, is not so fortunate as to possess.

Moreover, as every would-be historian soon realizes, a certain lapse of time is necessary to a proper historical perspective. Affairs which seem of some importance when they occur are quite likely to be forgotten by the next generation,

while some apparently trifling and insignificant event may stand out later as of paramount interest in its relation to the general narrative of those happenings which preceded or followed it.

The writer can vaguely remember the arrival of the barque Amy, mentioned in the preceding chapter, and he recalls being lifted aboard that old whaler and walking about her oil-soaked decks. He remembers dimly that the occasion seemed to hold something of sadness for the owner of the paternal hand he clasped so tightly, but it was many years after that before the significance of the experience dawned upon his consciousness.

Soon after that time he recalls that, during 'the long vacation' there were more or less people about the town who went by the name of 'strangers.' They wore better, or at least more showy, clothes than most of the townspeople, and they were gayer and more noisy. They called the commons 'moors,' and everything was 'quaint.' What interested him most, however, was that they would buy pond-lilies at two-for-a-cent, or even a cent apiece for extra fine ones, and sugared

A WHALING BARK OF THE SIXTIES

flag-root at five cents a bunch, so the town boys, who valued but lightly such easily procurable commodities, exchanged them for pennies and nickels, and waxed prosperous. The current quotation for running 'errants' soon advanced from a penny to a nickel, or even as much as a dime on occasion.

This is not exactly history, but it is that phase of the subject which made the strongest impression on the writer along in the seventies, and it meant that the summer vacationists had discovered Nantucket, rescued her from decay and oblivion, and given her a new lease of life.

When the David Thain House on Main Street, nearly opposite Fair Street, was being built, it was quite generally predicted that it would probably be the last house ever built on Nantucket. That was only about fifty years ago, yet within a very few years carpenters from 'off-island' had to be sent for to keep up with the building boom, and the number of houses on the island has perhaps doubled since then. Soon horse hire jumped from a dollar a day to three or four, and a cat-boat, with services of skipper and mate,

brought in the fabulous revenue of eight dollars for a single day! The old town began to spruce up, houses, barns and fences were repaired and painted, and something like prosperity dawned once more. Then, in '74, there were two boats a day all summer, instead of only one; new hotels were built or projected, old mansion houses were turned into boarding houses, and at the height of the season all were filled to capacity. On some days 'excursions' to the island were run on the Monohansett or the old Granite State, and the strangers filled the streets of the old town and overran into the lanes and alleys. And one day in August President Grant came down to see what it was all about, and was driven through the principal streets in an open barouche, the observed of all observers.

In '74 we watched with awe the raising of the stupendous monolith which forms the shaft of our soldiers' monument, and Monument Square was christened in a day. In the summer of '76 we had a steamer of our own, the Island Belle, running to Wauwinet twice every day. Two years later the 'water-works,' an unheard-

of innovation, were started, and the next year we all had running water right in the house, and did not have to go to the pump any more; though, as the croakers said, there were plenty of pumps, not to mention cisterns, and Moses Joy, Jr., who was a Nantucketer himself, must be crazy to think we needed water works; 'and how was he going to make water run up hill, anyhow?' But the croakers didn't know about 'the rezzevoy' then.

Then (wonder of wonders!) in 1880 there was talk of a railroad. And another Nantucketer, 'Phil' Folger, was connected with that. We took no stock in it, literally or figuratively, but it was actually built, nevertheless, and opened to Surfside in '81, in spite of the insuperable difficulties of that mighty engineering feat, the crossing of the Goose Pond on an embankment — which simply 'couldn't be done, and that's all there was about it,' for, as every one knew, 'the Goose Pond had no bottom, and the stuff would settle faster'n they could dump it in there.'

A big hotel was built at Surfside, and every one who had the price, and some who didn't, bought one or more building

lots in that prospective summer city by the sea, which (alas!) never materialized. And in August came the great Coffin Reunion, when the Coffins from all over the world came back to the home of their great progenitor, Tristram, and celebrated for days. And the great iron horse on the little 'narrow gouge,' which had been christened 'Dionis,' in honor of Tristram's good wife (several times great-grandmother of all the members of the clan) puffed and chugged, and drew them all over to Surfside, where a monster clambake was served; and there were speeches, and a band, and dancing, and a baseball game, and much feasting and merry-making and excitement — quite like an old-time Shearing Day.

That was a great year, '81, for at last the jetty, which had been talked of for a hundred years, more or less, and which was going to make Nantucket Harbor a great port of refuge for storm-bound vessels, was started, and we walked over to Cliff Beach, and saw the great derricks dumping big rocks overboard from the barges, apparently without purpose.

The next summer President Arthur

came, and was hailed as the chief. In '83 the big boom at Brant Point was on, and the old Atlantic Hall building on Main Street, which had been Quaker meeting-house, straw works, Town Hall, wood-working shop, dance-hall, skating-rink, and many other things in its day, was moved down onto the Point to become a part of the great new Hotel Nantucket, which, it was believed, would be the leading hotel of the island. But Fate decreed otherwise, for it never succeeded; and a few years later old Atlantic Hall went back to town and landed in a new place — where the old billiard-hall and bowling-alley used to be on South Water Street. Now it is a 'movie' theatre and a lodge room, a dance-hall and auditorium, which at times once more serves the purpose of a Town Hall. The checkered history of this classic structure deserves a chapter all to itself, but space forbids.

In '84 the railroad was extended to Siasconset, which, during the preceding decade, had had a boom of its own, and had been growing even faster, proportionately, than the town itself. On the day the first passenger trains were run,

July 8th, there was a big celebration of the event in the 'patch-work village,' as some one has called old 'Sconset.

And so the summer population grew and grew, until by and by it was said there were probably as many people on the island at the height of the season as in the palmy days of the early forties, when the ten-thousand mark was reached.

The three thousand or so of the permanent population now had plenty to do in summer, catering to these other thousands, who came with money to exchange for the things which Nantucket offered. Every winter more new cottages were built, furnishing employment for mechanics and laborers. Real estate values were climbing again, and estates which could hardly have been given away in the late sixties and early seventies now became very valuable. Old places in the town were bought and made over, and rents were unbelievably high. Houses which had formerly rented for five dollars a month now brought five hundred for a single summer. If they had a good view, even a thousand was not unusual, just for three months' use.

But the winters dragged, and there was still much unemployment for part of every year. The summers were short and a long way apart, and three thousand people could not live on three months' business. Then, all at once, it seemed, some one discovered that scallops were good to eat, and would bring a good price in New York. The flats and shoal waters round the island were fairly covered with these heretofore despised bivalves, and the writer actually remembers having been threatened with an emetic by an anxious parent on his confession that, with several other boys, he had that day roasted and eaten a lot of 'the nasty things' down on Brant Point. He effected a compromise on tincture of rhubarb, but as no unfavorable symptoms developed, he knew that the nasty things were good to eat; and finally the world at large awoke to the fact.

This gave many Nantucket men a new winter occupation, and since those days hundreds of thousands of gallons of 'eyes' have been shipped from the island, bringing hundreds of thousands of dollars of good money to the townspeople.

Of the events recorded in this chapter up to this point the writer may truly say, 'all of which I saw, and part of which I was,' but in 1885, like most of his contemporaries, on approaching manhood, he emigrated to America; and though, in the forty years which have since passed, he has returned to the island as often as circumstances would permit, and remained as long as possible each time, keeping always in fairly close touch with its concerns, the few succeeding pages must of necessity be somewhat less autobiographical, and the information imparted must have been obtained largely at second hand.

A few of the more notable events during the past generation may be summed up briefly.

Several attempts to connect the island with the mainland by telegraphic cable had been made at various times, dating as far back as 1840, but none had been permanently successful until the United States Government cable was finally completed in 1886, preliminary to the establishment of a Weather Bureau Station, which, owing to the location of the island,

has proved of great importance and value to the service. The cable has since been sold to private parties, and it has been maintained with few interruptions since its installation.

Electric lights were introduced in 1889 by a private company, and the gas and electric services were later combined under one ownership, financed largely by local capital.

The following year a street-car line was laid from Main Street to the steamboat wharf, and also to Hotel Nantucket, on Brant Point, and as far as the Sea Cliff Hotel, on Cliff Road. Although the system was operated for two seasons, the project was a financial failure, and the 'horse cars' passed on.

In 1894 three important events occurred. The 'State Road' to Siasconset was started, Nantucket securing one of the first appropriations under the act passed at that time establishing the Massachusetts Board of Highway Commissioners, and beginning the construction of first class roads and boulevards under state control and supervision. The Nantucket Historical Association, which has

long since amply justified its existence in preserving so much of historic interest, was organized in that year; and by a curious coincidence the Sons and Daughters of Nantucket, a purely social organization, holding an annual dinner and reunion in Boston in the autumn, was started at about the same time, largely through the efforts of Alexander Starbuck, of Waltham, its first president. This organization has flourished for a third of a century, and the annual reunions held in Boston each November are now more popular than ever, with an average attendance of over two hundred.

On July 9, 10, and 11, 1895, the centennial of the change of the town's name from Sherburne to Nantucket was celebrated by appropriate exercises and festivities. The Nantucket railroad was rebuilt by a more direct route to Siasconset in that year.

In the closing years of the century the last surviving members of the Society of Friends died, William Hosier, the last male Quaker in 1899, and Eunice Paddock, the last Quakeress, in 1900.[1]

[1] Since the first edition of this book appeared the

The twentieth century has so far brought few changes of note. The summer business has grown steadily, and though there have been good seasons and seasons which were not so good, there has been no really bad season, and the fluctuations from year to year are only such as might normally be expected. The fame of the island as a summer resort is spreading constantly, and thousands of people from all over the country, representing every state in the Union, now seek out the 'little purple island' every summer. Many acquire the habit of coming back year after year, and of lingering a little later into each autumn — that most glorious of all the seasons here.

There is comparatively little of the ostentation and display characteristic of most fashionable summer resorts to be found here, and the social life is quite simple and unaffected, though many of

writer has learned that Mrs. Mary Swain Mitchell, widow of Peleg Mitchell, a birth-right and life-long member of the Society of Friends, survived the century, passing away in 1902, at the age of eighty-nine years and nine months. During her later years Friends' Meeting was held at times in her house, now the headquarters of the Maria Mitchell Association.

the regular cottage colony are people of wealth and social standing.

The bathing, boating, yachting, fishing and other salt water sports and pleasures are among the chief attractions to many. Driving, riding or walking over the moors to the various little villages and points of interest about the island are a source of never-ending enjoyment to others. Golf links at both town and 'Sconset are extremely popular, the nature of the courses, as well as the remarkable climate, being particularly favorable to the enjoyment of this sport. For, when all is said, it is perhaps the climate which is Nantucket's greatest asset. As compared with most places on the mainland, it may be fairly said that really hot weather is unknown. The average range of temperature in summer is from ten to fifteen degrees lower than at most other points this side of the Rocky Mountains in anything like the same latitude, and as there is almost always a breeze, and 'every breeze is a sea-breeze,' out-of-door sports may always be enjoyed with zest. The nights are always cool.

In 1901 a wireless telegraph plant was

established at Siasconset by the 'New York Herald' — the first established in America — to report passing ships via the Nantucket lightship, over forty miles off shore, on which a duplicate equipment was installed. Later the Marconi Company, which made the installations for the 'Herald,' took over the land plant, and the Government took the station on the lightship.

The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association was founded in 1902, and the birthplace of this eminent daughter of the island, who held the professorship of astronomy at Vassar College from 1865 to 1888, was purchased. In 1913 an observatory was built, in which the five-inch telescope formerly owned and used by the astronomer was set up. Later a modern seven and one-half inch Cooke refracting telescope was installed, and much valuable work in astronomical observation and photography has since been done here. The Association now has over six hundred members, and maintains the birthplace, in which are housed valuable botanical, entomological, geological, and other scientific collections, as a memorial to Miss Mitchell.

The observatory, with a trained astronomer in charge, is open to the public on certain evenings, when opportunity is afforded to view the skies under expert guidance.

In 1903 the Coffin School, which had been closed for some years, was reopened as a manual training school, and the income from its endowment is now used to furnish a course in the manual arts to all pupils of the public schools. The Coffin School Association was formed in that year to work toward increasing the endowment and extending the usefulness of the institution, and over fifty thousand dollars has been added through its efforts to the permanent invested funds of the school.

The Nantucket Athletic Club completed and opened in 1905 its fine new club house on the harbor front. Extensive additions have been made to the plant, the name having since been changed to The Nantucket Yacht Club.

An up-to-date electric fire-alarm system was installed by the town in 1907, replacing the century-old custom of maintaining night-watchmen in the South Tower

to alarm the town by ringing the bell on the discovery of an incipient fire.

The two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the settlement of the island was celebrated by the Historical Association in 1909 — the principal event being a largely attended banquet with appropriate exercises, held at the Sea Cliff Inn on the evening of July 21st.

The death of 'Billy' Clark, the last of Nantucket's town criers, on August 17, 1909, marked the passing of a characteristic and time-honored institution in the island's history.

In the spring of 1911, a group of people interested in the establishment of a hospital at Nantucket met and organized as 'The Nantucket Cottage Hospital Association.' Subscriptions were invited and in a few months the enterprise was launched in a modest way. In July, 1913, the first fair in aid of the hospital was held and a substantial sum was realized. From that time the institution has grown steadily. Many gifts and legacies have added to its endowment, and each year a fête or a drive in its behalf has been conducted. The hospital is now the popular

philanthropy with the summer people, and the Nantucketers have shown their appreciation of it by their contributions of time and money.

The completion of the two stone breakwaters, known as the Eastern and Western 'Jetties,' extending from the shores of the island out to the 'Bar,' and the dredging done on the bar itself, all at the expense of the Federal Government, have resulted in a marked improvement in the main channel into the harbor, so that a minimum depth of at least fifteen feet at low water in the shallowest places may now be counted upon. This has been supplemented by work done at State expense in extending and deepening the anchorage ground in the inner harbor. Just what the effect of such operations might have been if undertaken three quarters of a century earlier is an interesting subject for conjecture.

During the past quarter-century Nantucket has grown steadily in importance as a fishing port. The spring and fall fishing for cod and haddock in dories from the shore at Surfside and Siasconset, formerly quite an important industry,

has now almost entirely ceased, only a few venturesome old-timers still engaging in it occasionally when conditions are favorable. The old hand-liners and trawlers have been almost completely displaced by a fleet of modern power boats, making their headquarters here and fishing by modern methods on the shoals around the island. Some of these are quite sizable craft, almost as long over all as some of the old-time whalers, though of decidedly different model, rig and equipment. Immense quantities of flounders are now shipped from Nantucket, nearly all of which go to the New York market, to supply the demand for 'filet of sole.' It is no unusual occurrence for the daily steamboat to New Bedford to carry as high as a thousand barrels of fish, and shipments as high as fifteen hundred barrels in a single day are on record.

The shell-fish industry, also, is of great and increasing importance. Besides the scallop fishery, which yields large returns in its season to those who engage in it, the humble quahaug has come into its own in these later times. An immense and apparently inexhaustible bed of these 'hard-

shell clams,' as they are called in New York, was discovered in 1913 out back of the bar in much deeper water than these shell-fish had before that time been taken from in profitable quantities. Many large boats, using heavy dredges hoisted by power, have been working these 'off-shore grounds' for the past fifteen years, and good returns are still obtained by the quahaug fleet.

Within the past year a new fishing industry (for Nantucket) has developed some importance through the location of a bed of the large deep-sea scallops far off-shore to the west of the island, southwest of Martha's Vineyard. This has been worked by some of the Nantucket boatmen with fairly profitable returns and bids fair to become another source of revenue to the island fishermen.

It has been claimed that Nantucket now ranks second only to Gloucester as the leading fishing port in the State, and it has been estimated that the total value of the fish products obtained and exported from the island in some recent years approximates a million dollars.

CHAPTER XII

THE WORLD WAR AND SINCE

THE first edition of this 'Story' appeared during the early months of what has since come to be known as the 'World War.' America was then, officially at least, neutral, and it was not until more than two years later that we became one of the belligerents.

Nantucket gave convincing proof of her loyalty and patriotism during those trying months after we came in. Her record of a hundred and ninety-two in the various branches of the service, from a population of only a little over three thousand, is one to be proud of, and her total subscriptions of $1,665,500 to the five Liberty Loans was little short of phenomenal when we recall that the total assessed value of all her property, real and personal, at that time was only about five millions. With a per-capita subscription of over $550, her claim to recognition as the banner town in the whole country in this respect has, so far as we

are aware, never been disputed, or even questioned. The Red Cross, Y.M.C.A., and other 'drives' for funds were equally well supported, and in every way she did all that was expected of her and more throughout the war.

One Nantucketer (Byron L. Sylvaro) was killed in action in France, and the local American Legion Post is appropriately named in his honor. In the navy Francis L. Wilkes was drowned at sea from U.S.S. Tampa. Three others died in service before the demobilization, and several more have 'gone West' since as a direct or indirect result of their war service.

Our little island was perhaps nearer to any actual hostilities than most any other part of the country, for on October 8, 1916, a German submarine sank six steamers within about sixty miles of the south side; and again on August 10, 1918, another undersea boat attacked the fishing fleet on Georges Bank, sinking several vessels, and also, on the same date, the British steamer Penistone. Nineteen of the surviving fishermen and nine of the steamer's crew, after a long row in open

boats, landed on the east end of Nantucket, creating considerable excitement among the islanders.

The undesirable notoriety acquired in the news dispatches by reason of these events doubtless had some psychological effect in keeping timid tourists away from the island, some reservations being cancelled; but considering that the country was at war, the summer business suffered comparatively little. In September, 1917, the presidential yacht Mayflower brought President Wilson and Mrs. Wilson to the island for a few days' visit.

Probably the most noteworthy effect of the war, locally, was the repeal of the special act excluding automobiles from the island, which had been passed by the Massachusetts Legislature in response to a petition and accepted by the voters (376 to 234) under a referendum provision, on June 18, 1914.

This automobile controversy had been a long and bitter fight, dating back to the early years of the century, causing much animosity and hard feeling between the 'pros' and the 'cons,' and continuing down to May 15, 1918, when the ques-

tion was again referred to the voters under another special act passed by the Legislature of that year, repealing the exclusion act. This time the pros won, by a rather narrow margin — 336 to 296 — and within less than a week thereafter there were eleven cars on the island. It is probably safe to say that there are at least eleven hundred now owned here — not to mention the hundreds more which are brought down each year by the summer residents and visitors. Nantucket now has its traffic squad, one-way streets, striped roadways, silent policemen, and all the other advantages or disadvantages (according to one's point of view) of any town on the mainland.

It is generally agreed that the deciding factor, which swung many of the voters from the anti to the pro side in the final fight, was the scrapping of the Nantucket railroad to Siasconset. Though the road had consistently lost money almost from the start, somehow it had continued to run after a fashion down to the autumn of 1917. The rails and rolling stock were then sold and shipped to France for war use. This left 'Sconset with no regular

means of transportation other than horses, and with its large and increasing summer population the situation looked serious to many who were interested in the prosperity of that end of the island. There seemed to be no method of compromise by which 'Sconset could be provided with motor transportation without letting in the cars, as no such discrimination was possible under the general laws. It was an emergency measure, and the automobiles were finally admitted.

While the probabilities are that sooner or later they would have come anyway, there are many, even among those who voted for their admission, who now believe that it was a mistake to admit them; that Nantucket lost a unique opportunity to advertise itself as the one resort in the country where the visitor could escape the stench of carbon monoxide, the shriek of the motor horn, and the constant fear of sudden death or serious injury by the modern juggernaut. However this may be, the motors are here, and it is generally conceded that they have come to stay. 'Sconset is now well served by two competing lines of motor passen-

ger buses, and many large trucks for freight and baggage; and though there are, as might be expected, some joy-riders and speed fiends who make things unpleasant at times, it is only fair to say that, for the most part, owners and drivers of cars use reasonable care, especially within the town limits.

Naturally the good roads movement received a great impetus with the coming of the cars, and very liberal appropriations, supplementing aid from the State, have been made for this purpose. The original State road to 'Sconset has been completely rebuilt in a first-class manner, and the road to and through Polpis to the North end of 'Sconset village has been equally well constructed, giving a circuit of about eighteen miles of excellent roadway. Other roads to Wauwinet, Quidnet, Madaket and the South Head of Hummock Pond have been built or are now under construction, and some of the old rutted roads have been much improved by the use of a tractor.

After one or two attempts which were not altogether successful, Nantucket is now connected with the mainland by a

submarine telephone cable, which was completed and officially dedicated with appropriate exercises in August, 1916. This has been a great convenience both to the islanders and to the summer visitors, and the few interruptions to the service which have occurred have proved only temporary, messages being transmitted in such emergencies by the telegraph cable.

The summer business, subject to some fluctuations, has steadily increased since the war, though a general impression seems to prevail that the tourist seasons are not so long as formerly, that the visitors come later, and that there is a larger percentage of transients to the total number. It has been suggested that this may be one of the indirect results of the admission of automobiles. On the other hand, there has been a steady and notable advance in real estate values during the last ten years, which has been reflected in rising rents for both all-the-year-round and summer property. So far the growth has been a healthy one, without any sudden inflation. Nantucket has practically escaped the speculative boom

which struck many parts of Cape Cod a few years ago (coincident with and following the Florida boom), leaving more or less havoc in its wake. It is to be hoped that our island may be spared that particular form of unwholesome inflation.

The assessors' valuations of real estate have been revised three times in the last decade till the total valuation of the town now approximates ten millions, the highest in its history, but still very conservative, based on selling prices. Public expenditures have about kept pace with the increasing revenue, having more than doubled within the decade to a total of over two hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars this year, which is more than ten times the average annual appropriations a half-century or more ago. Making all due allowance for the reduced purchasing power of the dollar, these figures are a rather startling commentary on the changed conditions in the old town within a generation or two. So far there has been no great advance in the tax rate, which is still one of the lowest in the State, averaging of late years round twenty dollars on a thousand. This year's town meeting

voted bond issues totaling over three hundred thousand dollars, for a new high school, a new sewerage system and a central fire station; and as a new town hall, with town and county offices, is much needed, a higher tax rate, higher valuations, or both, will probably have to be faced in the near future.

There has been a large amount of building in recent years, including not only high-class summer residences, but many new houses for the resident population, and several new business blocks. So many of the old places have been sold to 'off-islanders' for summer homes that there has been an increasing shortage of houses for the Nantucketers themselves and for the families who come to the island during the fishing season. This demand will have to be met as time goes on.

The Nantucket Cottage Hospital has continued to thrive, and is now one of the best-equipped institutions of its kind to be found anywhere outside of a large city. Many generous gifts and the continued zeal in its behalf, on the part of both the local people and the summer residents, have enabled those responsible for its

administration to enlarge and improve the facilities for caring for the sick and injured, to maintain at all times an efficient staff of nurses, and to meet any emergency which has arisen or is likely to arise.

In August, 1923, the first 'Main Street' fête was held, when the atmosphere of the palmy days was revived on the town's principal thoroughfare, many of the old-time scenes were re-enacted, and a large sum realized for the hospital. This pageant was repeated in 1925, and again in 1927, and it seems to be now established as a regular biennial event, with a house-to-house canvass for the necessary funds in the intervening years.

The local fire department has been greatly enlarged and improved, with a regular paid force of fire-fighters, two up-to-date motor pumpers, an auto-chemical, modern ladders and hose, etc., with the old-time steamers and hand tubs as a reserve.

Golf continues here, as elsewhere, to increase in popularity as a sport for those who can afford the time and expense, and another first-class eighteen-hole course

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MAIN STREET SQUARE, LOOKING NORTHEAST

is now in operation at Sankaty, making three courses now in use on the island, and all are well patronized.

The New Bedford, Martha's Vineyard & Nantucket Steamboat Company has shown commendable enterprise in replacing its outgrown and outworn side-wheel boats by two commodious up-to-date screw steamers, the Islander and the Nobska, sister ships, the former launched and put in operation in the summer of 1923, and the latter in the spring of 1925. A third steamer, with even greater capacity and accommodations for both freight and passengers, to be known as the New Bedford, is now projected, on the completion of which the Company announces its purpose to rechristen the Islander and Nobska, Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard respectively, thus having each place served by the new fleet represented in its nomenclature.

During the past year, the Jethro Coffin House, on Sunset Hill, built in 1686, and long known as 'the Oldest House,' now owned by the Nantucket Historical Association, has, through the generosity of Mr. Winthrop Coffin, of Boston, been

put in perfect repair and completely restored to what is believed to be substantially its original condition. The work has been done with painstaking thoroughness under the best available expert advice and supervision, and this old colonial mansion would now appear to be good for still further centuries — to stand as an object lesson of seventeenth-century New England architecture and artisanship, and as a monument to the early settlers of the island.

For some years, until quite recently, Nantucket was the headquarters of that branch of the Coast Guard Service popularly known as the 'Rum Chasers.' A 'mother ship' was established and maintained here, and the patrol fleet for this section of the coast operated from this port. This brought considerable business to the town, which was much appreciated, and the officers and enlisted men were a valuable addition to the winter population. Much regret was expressed, therefore, when orders went forth from the Treasury Department last year, transferring the headquarters base to Woods Hole. Some hope has recently been held

out that the fleet may again make Nantucket its home port, in which case its personnel will be assured of a hearty welcome back.

During the summer of 1927 a fairly regular passenger service by airplane was maintained by a private company between Boston and Nantucket, the flying time each way being but little over an hour. An occasional emergency trip was made to New York, and between schedules round the island sight-seeing trips at popular prices were quite well patronized by both the islanders and visitors, many availing themselves of this opportunity for a first experience in flying.

Nantucket's latest ambition is the establishment of a permanent whaling museum as a memorial to the forefathers who made the old town famous throughout the world for nearly two centuries. The project is still in embryo at this writing, and it is too early to go into details here, but if it succeeds it means one more notable attraction added to the many which now make Nantucket unique among the summer resorts of America.

In concluding this revision and ex-

pansion of the original edition of this 'Story' the writer is again impelled to ask the indulgence of his readers for its manifest incompleteness. No one realizes better than he how much more remains to be told, how many interesting events and happenings have been left out altogether, or how many subjects have been barely touched upon or, at the best, inadequately treated. Once more, therefore, he refers those who may wish to know more of this little island's past to the rich store of material which is now available, and which is being added to year by year as new writers come under the spell of its fascination.

While the title-page of the book reads: 'A *Brief* History of the Island and Its People,' even that may seem presumptuous. Let the main title then stand for what has been attempted — not to write a history, but to tell 'The Story of Old Nantucket.'

THE END

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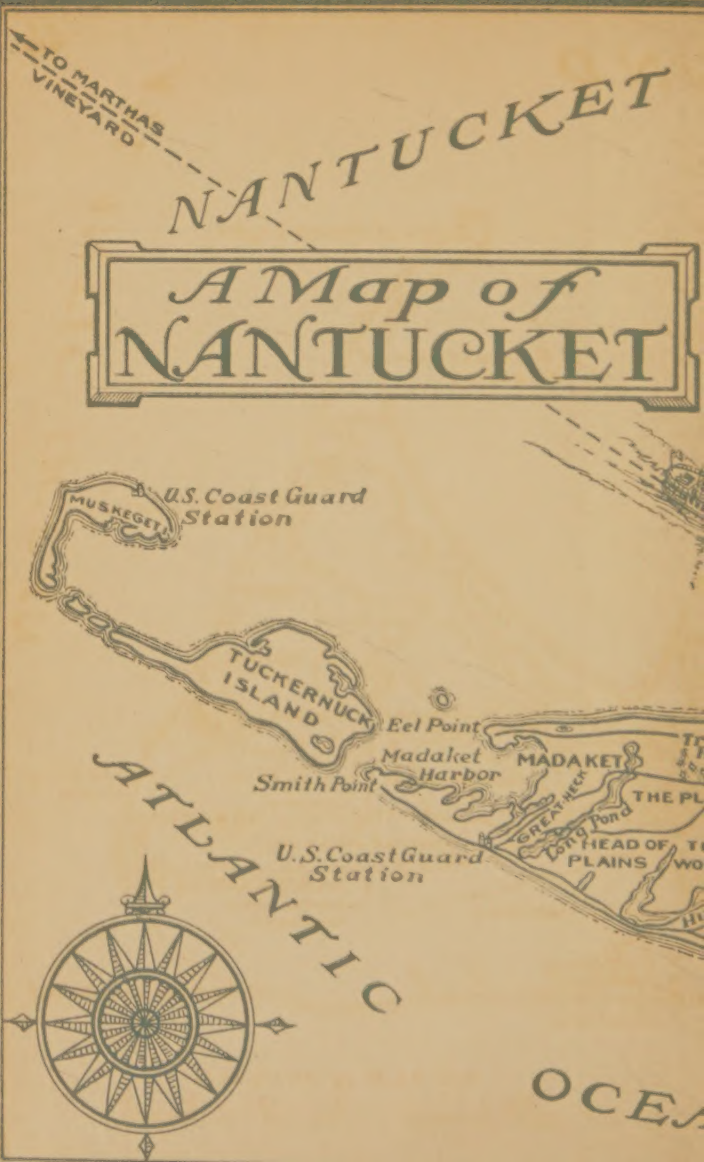
TO MARTHAS VINEYARD
NANTUCKET
A Map of NANTUCKET
MUSKEGET
U.S. Coast Guard Station
TUCKERNUCK ISLAND
Eel Point
Madaket Harbor
Smith Point
MADAKET
THE PL
GREAT HEATH
Long Pond
HEAD OF PLAINS
U.S. Coast Guard Station
ATLANTIC
OCE

UND
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Great Point Light
U.S. Coast Guard Station
COSKATA
The Haulover
WAUKNET
SQUAM
COATUE
HARBOR
POCOMO
QUIDNET
JETTY
QUAISET
POLPIS
Sachacha Pond
SHAWKEMO
Brant Pt. Light
SHIMMO
Sauls Hills
NORTH PASTURE
Sankaty Light
NANTUCKET
Gibbs Pond
PLAINFIELD
STATE ROAD
MIDDLE PASTURE
SIASCONSET
SOUTH PASTURE
SOUTH EAST QUARTER
Miacomet Pd.
SURFSIDE
Radio Compass Station
Tom Nevers Head
SCALE of MILES
1/2 1 2 3 4 5 6